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THE

ARTIST

MERCHANT

AND

STATESMAN



G. MAYR.

J. A. RENDS.

NEW YORK:
PAINE & BURGESS, 62 JOHN STREET.
1845.

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Ever Yours
H. Powers

THE ARTIST,

The Merchant,

AND

THE STATESMAN,

OF THE

AGE OF THE MEDICI, AND OF OUR OWN TIMES.

~~IN TWO VOLUMES.~~

BY C. EDWARDS LESTER,

U. S. CONSUL AT GENOA—AUTHOR OF THE GLORY AND SHAME OF ENGLAND—THE CONDITION AND FATE OF ENGLAND—TRANSLATOR OF MACHIAVELLI, ALFIERI, ETC.—HONORARY MEMBER OF THE ATENEO ITALIANO AT FLORENCE, ETC.

~~VOL. I.~~

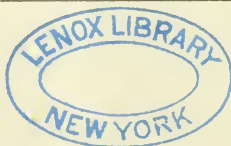
New York:

PAINE & BURGESS, 62 JOHN STREET.

1845.

E. A.

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DEDICATION
TO
EDWARD EVERETT.



SIR :

An old Greek writer tells us, that when his Countrymen came home from their victorious wars, all the young warriors brought their trophies to the feet of the Hero who had wielded the strongest arm in battle. While you are stepping once more upon your native soil, to receive the congratulations of friends and the acclamations of citizens, I trust you will allow one of them to offer you, if it be but an humble tribute of admiration, for the honor you have reflected upon your Country in Europe. From one of the loftiest and most difficult stations, you have commanded the admiration of a great Empire, and the gratitude of a great Republic.

When Marcus Tully had been long illustrious in the service of his country, as a Legislator and an Executor of the Laws, and had accomplished himself besides, in whatever the Philosophy and Literature of that age could furnish, he declared that as industry and wealth are the foundation of a people's strength, so nothing can more conduce to their dignity and glory than a liberal cultivation of Letters and

the Arts. As a Statesman, he knew the importance of commerce as a source of opulence to nations ; as a Philosopher, accustomed to observe the influences that most deeply affect their character ; as an Orator, drawing illustrations from lofty and beautiful objects, he felt the value of the creations of the Poet, the Painter, the Architect, and the Sculptor, though in no one of their divine arts had he won reputation to make him partial to their honors. He had visited the cities of Greece, to catch inspiration from the creations of genius in that World of the Ideal, and standing among the works of Phidias and Praxiteles, Parrhasius and Apelles, and the temples built to the Divinities she worshipped, he felt that the triumphs of her genius were more imperishable monuments to her fame, than even the memory of her battle-fields and the renown of her warriors. If in thus referring to the Roman Orator, I should seem to imply that you stand in similar relations to your country that that accomplished man sustained to the Roman Republic, I should only give expression to a sentiment that would be responded to by our citizens.

I have felt there was no one to whom I could more fittingly offer these volumes,—that there was no one who would receive them more kindly than yourself. You have lived in Florence where they were written—you are familiar with the living and the dead of whom I speak. You have been often in the Studio of Powers, have often heard his cheerful voice around his own fire-side, and you were among

those who early appreciated his genius and foretold his fame. You have stood in the solemn aisles of Santa Croce, and worshipped at the tombs of the great men who sleep there. You have read Dante, and Machiavelli, and Alfieri, in their own Divine Tongue, and you have communed with Michael Angelo and Raphael. You have looked off from the ivy-mantled Tower of Galileo, upon the vale of the yellow Arno, which “steals silently through its long reaches to the sea.” You have gazed on all that is beautiful and sad in that gay and mournful land. You best can judge how faithful I have been to truth—if I have transfused into these pages any portion of the Spirit which still lingers around those tombs of the great and the good of the Age of the Medici. When I wandered around Florence, I felt there were many lessons of wisdom we could learn there, that would make us wiser and better men. I have brought away with me to my own land, the mournful but inspiring moral that was pressed to my heart.

In publishing these Conversations with our gifted Countryman, I knew I should render a service to Art. In advocating the Establishment of a new Consular System, I hoped to render some service to the great interests of commerce. In going to the tombs of the Artists, the Authors, and the Statesmen, who flashed their light through the Middle Ages, I gratified my veneration for all that is noble in Liberty, and glowing in Genius. In the sketches

here thrown together, I hoped to excite a warmer desire, at least in the minds of a few, for the day to come when the Arts in America shall, by the judicious but generous aid of the State, take the high eminence they held in Greece under Pericles, and, in Florence, under Lorenzo de' Medici—when the Statesman and the Scholar shall again be united as they were in the Councils of the Free States of Antiquity and of the Middle Ages—when excited thousands shall gather around the monuments of the Sculptor, the Temples of the Architect, and the Battle-Pieces of the Painter, and crown the Artist with laurel, and send their glad shouts up to heaven.

I believe that glorious day is breaking—I have done what I could to hasten it. God speed the morning! With you, Sir, and with the men of my own times, I hope to find favor for these volumes—imperfectly as I may have executed my mission. With the men of other times, if, indeed, this Book should live to reach them, I hope to be remembered, when all my hopes which may now seem so illusive, shall be turned into history, as one who would gladly have exerted, if he could, a higher agency in bringing on the day when the Artist, the Merchant, and the Statesman, of this hemisphere, shall give reality to what now seems to many, but a pleasing vision. With great respect, I have the honor to be your fellow-citizen and friend,

C. EDWARDS LESTER.

New York, Oct. 15, 1845.

A LETTER

ON THE

Genius and Sculptures of Powers.

INSCRIBED TO NICHOLAS LONGWORTH, ESQ., OF CINCINNATI,
AND COL. JOHN S. PRESTON, OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

GENTLEMEN :

I COULD not express my satisfaction, if it were in my power, to offer you something of my own, worthy of your exalted character. But I need not indulge in any vain regrets, when I am able to inscribe to you these conversations with one who owes so much to your generosity, and appreciation of his genius, when he needed friends. It must be with no unenviable emotions that you hear in these times of the fame and the prosperity of one who, eight short years ago, was obliged to memorialize the Congress of his native country before he could be allowed to make a bust of Marshall ; and who has since then rivalled the grace and the beauty of the Grecian Genius. There was a time when the blind old Troubadour of Greece sang before the gates of cities for a piece of bread ; and the time came when they fought for the honor of having given him birth.

The time will come, too, when no one will be esteemed more fortunate than those who possess the classic marbles of Powers, except the men who will be known and loved as his earliest and most generous patrons.

The admiration of mankind has always been the reward of generous deeds, and it always will be. More than one prince who was brave in war and wise in council, is now remembered only as a patron of art and a friend of learning. But the purest incense of gratitude ever offered to the benefactors of mankind, has hallowed the names of those men who were first to welcome the early rays of genius that foretold the morning was breaking.

One of the greatest pleasures I promised myself in visiting Florence, was being admitted to the confidence and the friendship of Powers. I had not seen his works; but I had heard so many of our countrymen, and so many European sculptors who had seen and studied them, speak of him with enthusiasm, I felt sure that I should not be disappointed. And yet it seemed impossible that America, where the arts have had no foundation to build on, and where they have never been warmed into life by the genial influences that surround them in the Old World, should send forth a sculptor who would be recognized at once in Europe as worthy of standing by the side of Michael Angelo and Thorvaldsen.

When I went to Florence, I was kindly greeted

by Powers, as all my countrymen are ; and I regard it one of the most fortunate circumstances of my life, that I was afterwards honored by his intimacy and friendship. I passed many of my days and most of my evenings with him for several weeks, listening to his brilliant and instructive conversations ; and I reckon those weeks among the number over which it would give me pain to think a wave of oblivion should ever roll. And I desire here to pay the tribute of gratitude I owe to his generosity, in devoting so much of his time in going with me to visit repeatedly the beautiful objects that adorn that golden city. These visits were not confined to the ancient sculptures ; alive to everything that is beautiful in art, in nature, and in history, his eye seemed to kindle just as brightly when he looked upon the Tower of Galileo, from which the great Astronomer outwatched the stars ;—the stone on which Dante sat and talked with his friends at the corner of the street ;—the manuscripts of the Laurentian Library ;—as when he stood in the chapel of Michael Angelo.

There are few men of his time who have studied more intensely than Powers. It is true his youth lacked all classic associations, and his education was likely to make him anything but a sculptor. But he was born with a germ sure one day to develope itself ; and I consider it fortunate for him, for his country, and for art, that his childhood was passed among the pure influences of the country ; where

his natural genius was left free to unfold itself, and follow its own promptings. I have heard some persons express great regret he was not early brought under the influence of the schools. "If," say they, "he has proved himself capable of such astonishing works under all these disadvantages, what would he not have achieved had he early been familiar with the works of the great masters?" But this I conceive to be a false estimate, and I think the history of art clearly proves it. It exalts the teaching of the master above the guidance of nature; makes more of the close air of the hot-house than the pure breezes of heaven. I doubt not many a genius, as pure and lofty perhaps as his own, has been crushed by the smothering influences of artificial and conventional systems. All human experience can be safely appealed to, I think, in confirmation of this opinion. It is one of those facts which lie upon the surface of history, that the great teachers of mankind have always been taught in the school of nature. What had schools, or academies, or masters, to do in forming such men as Homer, and Dante, and Shakspeare; as Brutus, Cromwell, and Washington; as Galileo, Fulton, and Franklin? It seems long settled by human experience, that the men God sends into the world to reform their age, cannot be instructed by it. They are heaven-commissioned, and heaven-guided. Like Moses, and John the Baptist, they are taken from the deserts, and trained up by God. So deeply am I persuaded of these facts, I am con-

vinced that Powers' astonishing achievements in art are to be attributed as much to the circumstances of his early life, as to his gifted genius. His strong propensity to the art of sculpture was a portion of his nature. The first bust he ever saw awoke it at a glance, and kindled a desire into a passion which was to be the great fact of his life. This passion once stirred could not be quenched, and long years of disappointment and gloom, that would have annihilated the hope of almost any other man, only inflamed his soul with a still deeper enthusiasm. One of the first busts he ever made was General Jackson's, and it is perhaps his best. The Eve was his first statue, although Thorvaldsden declared, that "any other man might be proud of it as his last."

It will not be pretended that any very close analogy can be traced between the advancement of science and the progress of art, though they move on almost necessarily hand in hand. But beyond this the analogy fails; for while achievements in the Natural Sciences become the legacy of successive generations, the artist is obliged to rely on himself in winning his fame. The schoolboy is now familiar in his tenth year with the great facts which cost Kepler and Newton such intense study, such patient and persevering toil; and the young astronomer begins where those great pioneers in science stopped. But the Fine Arts are graduated by no such scale. The domain of the Sculptor, the Painter, and the Poet, is trodden by no school-

novice ; unless he be gifted with genius and consecrate himself to toil. The sceptre of the artist cannot be transmitted to a successor of his own choosing, —like the tiara of St. Peter ; as it *should* be, the succession is in God. The young aspirant of fame in the arts stands before the statue of Moses, or the Apollo Belvidere ; and the pupil of Galileo looks up through the ether fields and communes with the Medicean stars. That is all there is of the parallel. The latter finds his work done, and he goes forward with a bold, firm step ; for he knows his foundation is immovable, and he cannot miss his way. But the first step of the young sculptor is upon enchanted ground ; and although he may be guided in some portion of his path by the lights of those who have gone before him, yet if he would leave the bright name he loves to dream of, he must abandon their track, and mount to a new region, where the fancy of Phidias and Michael Angelo never soared. And although the young astronomer may kindle some faint light in some distant field of space, and leave some new table of calculation to save toil, or transmit some beautiful instrument to his successor,—yet he does not hope to discover any new satellites wheeling in beauty around Jupiter, nor leave a name that will contend with the Florentine Prisoner for the admiration and gratitude of the world. He is guided in all his calculations by the unvarying principles of a fixed and even a mathematical science.

I have brought to this illustration the noblest of

all the natural sciences, and contrasted it with the noblest of all the fine arts, to show how widely they differ from each other in their progress. The votary of the one may send his fancy beyond the reach of the telescope, and it may wing its exulting way to wheeling systems that have not yet transmitted their twinkling light to the fixed stars; but this has little to do with the practical business of the astronomer. His landmarks are established along the heavens, and he is in a measure confined by the very principles that guide him. But the sculptor lives, and moves, and dreams in an ideal world. However bright and airy may be the visions of his fancy, he may make them live and almost breathe in marble. Like the poet, he may choose his own theme, and let fancy follow her own guidings; while the astronomer, like the historian, must inhabit a real world, nor ever treat his imagination to inventions or dreams.

But while the sculptor is bound by no limits he cannot pass, the vastness of his field, and the very idealism of his art only increase his difficulty. The whole domain of truth, and history, and fiction, have been in all ages open to the poet; and the Homers, the Virgils, the Dantes, and the Shakspeares, have never exceeded the Phidiases, the Praxiteles, the Michael Angelos, and the Thorvaldsens. Many a writer has refined upon these matters, but I believe it is generally conceded there have been but four great schools or eras in sculpture. The Grecian, the Roman, the Italian of the middle ages with Michael

Angelo for a founder, and the modern European headed by Thorvaldsen. But the declaration of the Great Dane, that "The entrance of Powers upon the field constituted an era in art," is already more than verified. Such an opinion, I am aware, many of his countrymen may be unprepared for, although in Europe it finds general concurrence. It may be well to illustrate it by a few considerations.

In *Busts*, Powers is believed to have surpassed all his predecessors of all time. Nothing is hazarded by making this unqualified assertion. In the Oct. Number of the "*Giornale Arcadico*" at Rome (1840) Sigr. Migliarini, a Professor attached to the Grand Ducal Gallery of Florence, in a learned essay upon the state of the arts, did not hesitate to declare that Powers' *Busts* were superior to any others, ancient or modern.* The compliment from Prof.

* Says J. Morrison Harris, Esq., of Baltimore, a gentleman of rare learning and elegant taste in the fine arts, in a letter on this subject which I find in the National Intelligencer of May 1, 1845; in speaking of this learned Archæologist's *critique*: "It commences with a sketch of the celebrated LYSIPPUS, who, without the benefit of a master's instructions, attained so high a reputation as to be admitted into the distinguished trio who alone were deemed worthy to perpetuate the likeness of Alexander the Great. The three were APELLES in painting; PIRGO-TELES in intaglios; and LYSIPPUS in bronze statues.

"By the side of this great artist M. MIGLIARINI places POWERS; and then proceeds to speak of his accidental acquaintance with some one in Cincinnati who taught him how to take a cast in clay! and says:

Migliarini came from a very unsuspicious quarter; for the spirit which has for ages elevated the Italians

“ ‘Eagerly to endeavor to imitate the works of this individual; then to make an attempt from life, first with a view to equal, and then to surpass what he had seen; finally, to succeed in making beautiful likenesses, such certainly as he had seen no example of before: all this was so rapidly accomplished that it is not easy to relate the steps of the progress, so swift was his flight, borne on the pinions of a happy genius.

‘If this artist, urged by native inclination, had succeeded in imitating nature servilely, though with exactness, it would not have been matter of great astonishment. But at the very first glance Mr. Powers rose to the just conception of a kind of representation *which should contain in union with all the characteristic parts, the natural and expressive spirit of each individual*. He has dedicated himself to the preservation of the whole character, while at the same time he imitates the porosities and habitual wrinkles of the skin, so that he might be called *the Denner of Sculpture*. Such a union of rare capacities becomes *marvellous* in one who could have no previous knowledge of the labors of the Greeks, nor of the works of Donatello, of Mino di Fiesole, and Gambarelli.’ ”

“The learned critic then goes on to compare the busts of POWERS for truthfulness and perfect finish to the paintings of APOLLO; and, after noticing an objection which had been urged by some, that although our artist might make a fine bust, yet he would not produce good full lengths, he concludes thus:

‘He who has been able to make such progress without a master, will easily achieve whatever is yet wanting now that he is placed in a situation more favorable to his progress. Wherever there is the gift of a happy genius,

in the Fine Arts above all other modern nations still lives, and they concede the palm to a foreigner only when they can deny it no longer. Professor Migliarini is esteemed one of the most sound, and even severe judges of the Italian school. Another thing should be noticed. The Journals of Arts in Italy

joined with assiduity and a passion for the chosen art, together with the modesty necessary to a constant search after improvement, there it is safe to predict a complete and easy success.’”

“In speaking of this article, our distinguished Minister at the Court of St. James, himself a judge whose opinions are entitled to great weight, remarks :

“ ‘ This praise of M. Migliarini is evidently bestowed in good faith and with good will. It is not only the language of a panegyrist, but is framed with care to avoid shocking national partialities and wounding the sensibility of eminent contemporaries among his own countrymen. He weighs every word in the golden scales of a learned criticism, and yet not only institutes an elaborate comparison between Mr. Powers’s case and that of Lysippus, but justly states that the case of our countryman in attaining such excellence not only without a master, properly so called, but without the advantage of a general contemplation of works of art, *is without a parallel.*’

“ Language like this from such men as Professor MIGLIARINI and EDWARD EVERETT, is of high value ; and the thousands of English, Italians, and Americans, who, since the period alluded to by these gentlemen, have thronged the studio, and torn themselves away with so much regret from the works of HIRAM POWERS, will warmly approve the sentiment, and echo the eulogy of the passage I have quoted.”

are entitled to more consideration in such matters than could perhaps be extended towards those of any other nation. Favoritism has little to do with their criticism, for their writers seldom resort to the practice so common in England and our own country, of taking shelter under anonymous signatures from the consequences of their ignorance, their carelessness, their insincerity, and their favoritism. This practice has perhaps been the origin of more evil than any other system of literary shuffling could have produced, and it has entailed upon us a humiliating system of criticism unworthy of free and intelligent men. In such a state of things, the critic has nothing to lose, and often much to gain, by abuse on one side and puffs on the other. But in Italy the case is different. The opinion of the Professor in Art, publicly expressed, passes a severe and trying scrutiny; and a surer road to infamy could not be taken than a dishonest criticism.

In addition to this high authority, I might allude to many others of less reputation. I will only make an extract from a British Journal which is supposed to express, at least in regard to foreign artists, the opinions of the ablest critics. As long ago as 1841, a writer of the London Court Journal says: "I had met Powers previous to visiting his studio, and a finer face it is not possible to conceive, or one more overflowing with genius and imagination. There is an almost superhuman lustre in his eyes which gives one an idea that they in themselves contain a creative

power, and that he could look a soul into the images he forms. As for his busts, the power of art, almost of nature, can no further go. The statue of Eve, still in the clay, is beautifully moulded,—more beautiful, I think, than that of the Venus in the Tribune.” I might quote the opinions of the London Journals recently published. Men there gazed on the Greek Slave when they saw it the first time as those men gazed on the Venus de Medici, who dug it up from the earth. I have heard but one opinion expressed of Powers’ busts. It may not be malapropos to remark that in Europe a very different opinion prevails in regard to the merit of the sculptor who executes a fine bust. With us he is, in popular opinion, reduced almost to a level with the worker of Plaster of Paris heads. In Italy, the sculptor who excels all others in busts stands at the head of one of the most esteemed, and really the most important branch of sculpture; for the primitive design of that noble art is to transmit to future times the human form, with all its expression and all its peculiarities, as the character beamed from the countenance. The head of any statue in marble is as peculiarly the great point of interest as it is in the body of a man, and for this reason, the artist who can make a perfect bust can make a perfect statue; for all that delicate perception of character and feeling necessary to make any bust that ever came from the studio of Powers, would ensure the triumph of the artist in any ideal work whatever.

But the time has gone by when visitors come to Powers' studio only to see his busts. It is the opinion of many celebrated connoisseurs, that Powers, in his *ideal works*, has as far surpassed all his rivals, as he has done in his busts; and those I have met in Florence whose judgment in such matters is regarded with great respect, frequently assured me that they esteemed the Eve, and the Slave, and the Fisherboy, superior to any similar works now existing. My own opinion would certainly add little to the decision of such men, but after some years' residence in Italy, during which time I have been necessarily favored with considerable facilities for observation, I could not withhold from Powers' chief works an admiration I have never felt with all the concurrence of education and popular opinion to the contrary, for any of the works of the ancient masters of a corresponding style. All who gaze upon the Slave and the Eve, seem to go away with that beautiful emotion which long lingers around one, like some ideal form that sometimes, in the calm sleep of an early spring morning, flits over the fancy, but cannot be forgotten. It wakes us—we quiet ourselves and try to sleep and bring back the vision again.

In these compositions there is the highest style of the ideal and the purest expressions of nature. They seem, like his busts, to have been copied from life (and they were), but they were composed from a great variety of models. Unlike other female

statues I have seen, they combine all that is beautiful in the ideal that glows in the fancy, and all that is cheerful and home-like in the fair beings who cluster around our own firesides, and live in our hearts. They are perfectly nude figures, and yet so pure is every line, and movement, and expression, that one feels as if standing in the garden where Eve stood among the flowers, with angels and with God, "and was naked and was not ashamed." An impure thought cannot rise in the bosom of the gazer, unless he be one who is unfit for the society of a pure woman. Some familiarity with foreign manners has made me prize more than ever the brightest gem which adorns the American woman—that primitive virtue which recoils from the very shade of impurity. And so far from feeling any apprehension that the exhibition of these statues in America would have any tendency to introduce among our women *foreign indelicacy*, I am persuaded they would be warmly greeted by all the enlightened and all the pure of both sexes, and leave every spectator with more exalted conceptions of the beauty and the divinity of virtue. They are as pure as Milton's magical pictures of the Garden of Eden, and over every pure-minded person they will exert as high and pure an influence.

I have not spoken of Powers' genius in the other great departments of sculpture. But he has gone farther. Some time last year he received a commission for a statue of Mr. Calhoun, for the city of

Charleston, and the model is nearly done. It displays the same consummate talent that appears in his other works,—particularly the head, which I regard as finer than any he has ever executed. The attitude is erect; in his right hand on a level with his eye, Calhoun holds a scroll on which is inscribed his political creed,—the folds of his toga are falling gracefully around him, and the whole expression is a fine personification of the old Roman Senator, but in the expression of the face and form there is an air of majesty I have never seen equalled in the full statue, and the likeness is as perfect as any bust in the studio.

The loss of Canova's Washington that once stood in the capital of North Carolina, was a public calamity—although it was far from being one of the best works of that Master. May God preserve to the inhabitants of South Carolina this statue of their noble Statesman for ever! Praise be to the Legislators of that noble State! She was the first State in the Union to give a commission to Powers. In close connection with South Carolina comes the city of New Orleans. A few years ago a few of her generous citizens pledged the necessary sum, and sent Powers a commission to execute a statue of Franklin. The work is begun.

But Powers will not content himself till he has triumphed in other fields of sculpture. He has in contemplation a magnificent group, the subject of which I am not now at liberty to mention, which

will constitute, I believe, if executed as well as his other works, the most superb group in the world. It is a subject which has never been attempted in sculpture or painting.

In the meantime he has trained up a large number of workmen who are superior to any in Florence, and they are all occupied. His orders are increasing faster than he can execute them, although his prices are higher than any other sculptor can command. The Slave has been finished and sent to England, and two copies of it have been ordered. The Eve is done, and he is varying the model to make a duplicate which, while it retains all its general proportions, will be different in some of its arrangements, to make it, strictly speaking, not a duplicate. He has been repeatedly offered for it \$5,000. Mr. Grant paid only \$3,700 for the Slave, but he was offered \$10,000 for it by several gentlemen in London, and refused to part with it. Commissions have recently been sent to Powers by two English noblemen (of whom Earl Dudley is one); the Sculptor is left to select his own subject and fix his own price. To the honor of a gentleman in Cincinnati, be it said, that an American, however, was the first who gave him such a commission. The Fisher-boy is commissioned, and a duplicate is ordered. His Proserpine, a single ideal bust, was ordered by Mr. Cary, of Philadelphia, for \$500, and a large number of duplicates, mostly for foreigners, have been ordered. He is desirous not to occupy

much of his time on busts, and he hoped that by raising his price orders would cease. From \$300 he rose to \$500, and his commissions have increased so rapidly, it is probable he will soon double the sum. This will be necessary, for even at this price he is obliged to deny many applicants. He told me he could not now make busts, even at that price, without loss. This may appear strange, but he not unfrequently passes many days upon a bust, after the best judges suppose it is done. Of all his workmen, and he has some he pays as high as four dollars a day (which in Italy is unprecedented), he cannot depend upon them for the finish of a single work. It is a singular fact, that the first time Powers took a chisel in his hand, he made a bust entirely, and finished it in a style superior to any workman or artist in Florence. His mechanical skill is as extraordinary as his creative genius.

There may be many who would be glad to possess some work of Powers, whose means would not justify the expense of a statue, or even of a bust, of themselves. To such I would recommend a copy of the Proserpine, which I promise *any lady* shall be even more perfect than herself. For a *boudoir* there is nothing so beautiful, and a more classic conception could not adorn a library. It is an exquisite ideal female bust, resting in a basket of Acanthus leaves, and it forms, perhaps, the gem of his studio. His two best busts are two of his first, executed entirely by his own hands, and for

that reason will one day possess a value that will belong to none of his other works, for such works are exceedingly rare. I allude to Gen. Jackson and Daniel Webster, two subjects and two busts Thorvaldsen declared superior to any he ever saw. A large number of individuals have desired to purchase the bust of Gen. Jackson, but the Sculptor assured me he would not allow it to leave his studio while the old Hero lived. That great and good man has been taken from us, and the bust will soon be sent to this country. Many individuals in different parts of the Union are desirous to have it. It will come to New York, and probably the city, or society, or State, will have it that will pay for it best. The bust of Webster is a duplicate of the one commissioned by the Boston Atheneum.

I should give a more particular description of these works and others already executed by the Sculptor, but in the "Conversations," such a description will be found from the lips of the Artist himself.

I have the honor, Gentlemen, with the highest respect to be

Your devoted Servant,

C. EDWARDS LESTER.

New York, Sept. 15, 1845.

AN APOLOGY FOR POWERS.

To those who know Mr. Powers, it is unnecessary to say that the idea of making these Conversations public did not originate with himself. "His character," said a Florentine scholar to me once, "is as chaste as one of his own statues." A portion of almost every morning for two months I passed in his studio, seeing him make cold marble breathe, and hearing him talk, and nearly every evening for the same period he visited me at my lodgings on the north bank of the Arno.

He *would* talk about the buckeyes of Ohio, the hunters and squatters of the West, and the dry, droll Yankees; and I would *make* him talk about the Michael Angelos, the Raphaels, and the Thorvaldsdens; and so we brought these 'great masters into strange company, for curiosity, and humor, as well as poverty, have something to do in making men acquainted with strange bed-fellows. In fact I could get the Sculptor to talk about everybody and everything but just himself. So I had to resort to a process not unknown at the bar,—I put my witness under a cross-examination, and at last got out his testimony.

I wished to know the history of the man who had

left the clock-factory on the banks of the Ohio, to go and make statues on the banks of the Arno, and I wished the world to know it. Carefully sketching every point I gained, two months at last put me in possession of these precious papers. I went over the mass I had written in short hand (an art which cost me many years ago not a tithe of the labor or time it has saved me since), and compiled these pages.

One morning, just before I left Florence, I took the manuscript under my arm and went down to Powers' studio. He was in an old Church he used for a rubbish-room, where I found him among the ghostly saints, crucifixes, and Madonnas, boxing up his beautiful Greek Slave, to send off to London.

"Well, Signor Autore," said he, as he came forward to give me a cordial greeting, and a good-humored smile lit up his fine face, "what are you going to publish about the Florentines when you get back to Yankeedom?"

"*That*, Signor Scultore," I replied, as I unrolled my manuscript, and held it up before his eyes.

"Ah! let us see.—'*Conversations with Powers, in his Studio at Florence.*'—The devil you are! This is a little the best joke I've seen for many a day. Ah! Yes! Ee!—This *would* be a nice joke for me! Your time must be precious if you can afford to scribble over half a ream just for the fun of making me think you ever intended to print it!"

"But I *shall* print it, Signor." We had cracked

too many jokes together,—he would not believe me.—I *made* him.

“Well,” said he drily, picking up his Greek cap, and making his way out of the old Church with the “Conversations” under his arm, “I’ll make you believe pretty quick that you’ll never do it;” and after him I ran in pursuit of my manuscript. The crazy old door he had slammed to behind him, and when I got into the street his green cap tassel was dancing round the corner of the church. Our race ended in his family room; where we found Mrs. Powers, in good American fashion, surrounded by her charming children. She was reading to them some of good old “Peter Parley’s” stories.

Here, over a flask of delicious Montepulciano, we sat down to discuss matters.

“Now, tell me, Signor Console,” said he, in a half quizzical style, peculiar to himself, “you really intend to make this joke a serious matter, do you?”

“To be sure I do,—all this scribbling will amount to something;” and I gave him a list of reasons long enough to convince Ben Jonson’s testy magistrate.

“Why, how *ridiculous* you are going to make me! Set a man to preaching about himself in this style!” (Sculptor reads the “Conversations,” while author breaks up the school, and goes to playing leap-frog with the pupils. Sweet little cherubs! You look just like your mother, and your *father*, too, which is more than I should like to say of all the Florentine children.)

“Why” (sculptor continues), “this isn’t the way I talked. I never sat down in this sober, Miss Dorothy style to spin off my life. We’ve been jabbering away these two months about Tom, Dick, and Harry, and you’ve gone off, in regular author style, to concoct a Life out of it; and you intend to print it! Oh, you rascal! *you* rascal! This is the way you fellows manufacture books, is it? Well, I see book-making is an art.” (!) (Reads on;—Another Uncle Toby leap-frog with good Peter Parley’s scholars. Oh! it would have done his old heart good to see these Florentine Yankees get on and tumble off, and laugh so hard they could not get on again.) “After all” (sculptor begins to look sober for the first time), “you seem, in some odd way, to have got it all down here about as I said it—nearer at least than I could say it again. And if I really thought, as you say, it could be of any service to the arts in America (for Heaven knows they need help bad enough), and people could be made to believe *I* never got this matter up, I should be willing to let you do what you propose.—(Oh! get away, chicks, with your leap-frog.) But, after all, *are* you in earnest? No joking now.”

I love to live over these cheerful scenes again. I love to think of that charming American home over the sea; but I only took up my pen for a few lines, and here I am on my fourth sheet, and have not come to the point yet.

We talked for an hour,—the clock struck twelve,

—the flask was dry, and my friend was convinced ! I summed up my argument in a triangle.—“*First*, false accounts of your life are constantly appearing, and will appear till the world knows the truth about you ; and as for the imputation of vanity, the malignant have already done their worst. *Second*, your history, and the history of your works, and your views of art, will be worth everything to the interests of art in America ;—and, last of all, the blame, if there be any, will fall on my shoulders. I will tell the world just how the case stands.”

I left the manuscript. Powers read every line of these Conversations with a pencil in his hand, and made all the alterations he wished, and every line he traced I have sacredly regarded. Where I had mistaken his opinions, or erred in fact, he corrected me, leaving me responsible for the style ; which I only regret should not have come from his own pen.

That responsibility I cheerfully assume, and I believe that in the publication of these Conversations I shall win the kind regard of my countrymen generally, as I flatter myself I have already that of the few scholars and artists I have read them to in New York.

Powers placed me under one restriction. It was my desire to publish the Conversations in a work by itself, that it might go forth under no hindrance, and at a price that would make it accessible to all. This wish I expressed to my friend. “No,” said he, “save me at least, my dear fellow, this unnecessary

display of vanity; print what you have written in your 'Artist, Merchant, and Statesman.''' He repeated the request with earnestness, and I have regarded it; otherwise I would not have hitched my sinker to his cork. I have taken care the reader should not suffer in other respects. These two volumes are sold for just what the Autobiography would have been sold for by itself.

Such, Reader, is the history of these Conversations. I have told it to do justice to the delicacy and ingenuousness of my friend and to myself. I am only sorry you must read the words in dull type, instead of hearing them fall from the lips of the great sculptor himself.

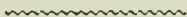
C. EDWARDS LESTER.

New York, 10th Sept., 1845.

CONVERSATIONS WITH POWERS,

IN HIS

STUDIO AT FLORENCE.



I WAS born in Woodstock, in the State of Vermont, the 29th of July, 1805. My parents were plain country people, who cultivated a little farm on the opposite side of the river, to which they moved when I was two or three years old. My father was a man of strong mind and stern disposition, and I feared him much more than I even did my mother or any one else, although he treated me with the utmost kindness, and with all proper indulgence. He rarely punished me more severely than by a look of displeasure, but this was enough to make me unhappy for many days. He never “whipped” me but once, and then he nearly took my skin off—I forget what I had done, but I remember my *impression* at the time was that I richly deserved it; a pretty sure proof that I *did*, for boys seldom admit the justice of such proceedings.

He was sober, industrious, and economical, and

it was well he was so, for our family was large, and required his utmost exertions with the aid of my mother to maintain us all. She not only spun and wove the cloth we wore, but she made up our clothing herself; and many a night she worked by a single tallow candle several hours after the family retired, when she had been hard at work all day. But to such sacrifices we owed not a few of the comforts we were blessed with; although I have felt keen pain, years after, in thinking how deep such cares and fatigue ploughed the furrows in her face. She was an amiable and just woman, and her charity and benevolence led her to make uncommon sacrifices and suffer great privations to relieve the wants of the poor and the suffering. I love to mention these things, for we never know how to prize such a woman or such a mother till her work is all done, and she has gone to receive the rich reward she is so sure to have in a better world. Many a time has she chided me for killing or tormenting flies and insects; and she was sufficiently severe in the discipline of her children, although she often said she would rather be punished a dozen times than inflict a blow upon one of us. I remember what harmony always reigned between my parents, and how deeply that impression was made upon my mind. I never saw them quarrel; no rude or unkind or even hasty word ever passed between them. They say there is a custom in one of the remote districts of England, of making the procession of the flitch of bacon every

year; and the flitch is presented to the married couple that have passed a twelvemonth without a quarrel or dispute. By the by, it must be an amusing spectacle to see the *contention* among the parties who are competitors for the prize. I am certain "our folks" would have got the bacon that way if we did not always have it in any other. But these good old customs are too fast passing away. The longer I live and the more I see of the world the brighter such scenes and such characters seem to me; and for this reason there is not a part of the earth to which I turn with such fondness and delight as to those quiet, simple homes, in New England; with their sedate but cheerful parents, the father with his pipe, and the mother with her knitting, around the broad, deep, fire-place, which blazes so bright one can count the flies on the ceiling. Sometimes I sigh for the good old days to come back again.—But there's no going back in this world,—all is rush, rush, rush, till we find peace in the grave.

The first recollection I can preserve of my mother is the earliest recollection I have. I must have been very young, for I could not look upon the table where she was at work; and my efforts to do this, contrary to her wishes, brought her thimble, with her finger in it, in juxtaposition with my cranium, which gave me my first induction to the noble science of craniology.—I ought to mention, that my more mature lessons in that science came into my

brain in a more agreeable way, but they were also less permanent.—My next recollection was being aided by my brother in “paddling” a Canadian goose to death with a “bread-peel,” with an occasional “side-winder” of an oven-broom, wielded on the occasion by one of my cousins. This act I have always looked upon with less satisfaction than I like to feel when I settle with my conscience ; and what made it *meaner* was, that the poor goose was in the snow, and could neither help herself by defence or flight, and they say it is never generous to tread upon a fallen foe. Phrenologists still tell me I have yet the organ of destructiveness unusually large, and I dare say they are right. But I have tried to overcome its dangerous tendencies, and have succeeded to such a degree that I have no wish to take the life of anything, except fleas and mosquitoes ; and as for the first named animals, I don’t think my residence in Italy is very likely to reconcile me to their depredations upon the human race ;—for I must say, that in this land of the Popes and the Cæsars they bite longer and harder, and earlier and later, than in any other country where it has been my lot to dwell.

My next recollection was of being escorted home by a large Newfoundland dog, from a bridge they were repairing, and which had had some of the planks taken up. He had followed me down to the river, and seeing me preparing to perform the hazardous feat of crossing over on the string-pieces, he

quietly walked up, and seizing me by the collar, turned me homeward, gently growling and wagging his tail. I was dreadfully alarmed, for I could not understand this new trick of my sage companion, and my cries brought out my mother, who—instead of beating the dog as I expected—soon saw through the whole matter, and caressed noble “Argus” with the greatest delight.

The train of my recollection is now lost in the ocean of boyish sports, tricks, and amusements. Like all boys born and brought up in New England, I did my share of skating, casting pewter guns, and going to the District School; where I made speeches on examination days, caricatures of the master, ferule in hand, tied feathers to flies’ legs, and saw them sail across the room, stuck pins into the boys’ seats, and saw them sit down and get up again, as soon after as they cleverly could; and divers other occupations,—anything but study, anything but a book; little thinking of the toil of my parents to obtain the means of keeping me at school. But still my time was not lost, I think, for I learned with ease, and accomplished my task sooner than most of my schoolmates. None of the incidents of this period of my life are worth telling, perhaps, but as I am just now in the mood of talking of myself, I will go on and tell you about a Gunpowder Plot, which took place under my auspices when I was about twelve or thirteen years old, for it seems to be the end of my childhood; and when the powder plot was fully

exploded, I passed the Rubicon and entered upon a new existence.

A family lived in the village by the name of Leat, and they were the bye-word of the neighborhood for all that was dirty, indolent, and improvident. Why, if I tore my clothes, I was as *ragged* as the Leats; if I carried a dirty face, I was as *dirty* as the Leats; and if I failed to do my task in time, I was as *lazy* as the Leats. They lived in the basement of a small building on the banks of the river, and they all ate, drank, worked, and slept, in the same room. There was a generous number of them, and, of course, there being few beds, they were pretty thick. The windows were glazed principally with paper, to say nothing of old hats, rags, &c. The *head* of this honored house fished in the trout season; and he would have put Izaak Walton to the blush, if that illustrious gentleman's angling virtues had been brought to so severe a proof. I've often seen him up to his waist in the middle of the river wading downwards, fishing for the fine large trout that came up stream, day after day, day after day, while his ragged boys followed down the side of the river to catch the fish he threw to the shore. On training days he speculated in gingerbread, and certainly his gingerbread was good; but in eating it, I treated my fancy to all sorts of flights to keep from thinking of its origin, for I had seen him make it; and although it had, in some unaccountable way, a good smell, the devil knew best how it came by it. Mr. Leat was a choleric

gentleman at times, and though the boys were fond of taunting him about his dirt and rags, they were careful to keep at a respectful distance ; and wo to that urchin who stood within reach of his crutch (for he was lame with all his other accomplishments), or even within reach of his fish-pole and line, for I've seen him hook a boy in the seat of his breeches, —and not unlikely in the seat itself—as he was trying to escape from his wrath ; for he was as adroit when necessary, in hooking a boy on land, as a fish in the water.

But to return to the powder-plot. I had made a great improvement in casting pewter guns, which brought to my laboratory any quantity of powder and lead ;—for money was scarce in “ those parts,” and my customers never came into very close contact with the little that sometimes got afloat. This improvement consisted in inserting into the breech, a fragment of a knife or fork handle of iron, through which a rivet had passed. This was done in casting ; and in use prevented the gun from blowing out at what was called *the touch-hole*. Advancing like all other great discoverers and inventors, from small beginnings I at last reached perfection. When this *Infernal Machine* was launched perfect from the foundry, upon an expectant, big-eyed world of boys, it excited a spirit of military competition, worthy of the days of Allen and Stark. One boy, who by hook or crook had got together a larger quantity of warlike munitions than any of his rivals, came forward and

made himself the proprietor of the gun. He in his turn, finding the piece of ordnance had risen in value, received a large advance, and sold out to the son of a dealer in "Groceries, codfish, New England rum, coffee, sugar, tea, gunpowder, Webster's Spelling Books," &c., who was the Guy Fawkes that stood at the bottom of the gunpowder plot against the Leats.

The night the Houses of Parliament were to be blown up was dark and stormy, but the window-sill had been examined by daylight and all the bearings taken. A brick-bat placed on the sill, sustained the breech of the gun, while the muzzle was with great caution run through the *paper* pane, near the head of the bed in which at least half a dozen Leats were profoundly sleeping; for it was now approaching the solemn hour of ten o'clock, when the quiet inhabitants of that region were generally esteemed to be steeped in their deepest slumbers.

The gun was charged to the muzzle, and rammed down with oakum; for it was thought that "Hi Powers' guns" could not burst under any pressure. All was made ready, the slow-match was carefully laid and set on fire, when the conspirators retired to the neighboring "Jimson weed" (Jamestown ward) to await the result. But they did not wait long; for an explosion followed which the whole neighborhood afterwards declared would have done honor to the "Barnard Six-pounder." The report was followed by a yell from the interior, of

mingled alarm, distress, and horror; amidst which the cries of Rat Leat, and Poll, were distinctly recognized. All was confusion for a few moments within, when a light was struck and the muzzle of Leat's fowling piece came poking through another pane; but it was soon withdrawn, and Mr. Leat himself, *in propria personâ*, but robed in fewer rags than he had generally offered to the gaze of the public, came rushing out of the door. This was a signal for a hasty retreat back to their hiding-place; for they well knew Mr. Leat was not a gentleman to approach when his dignity had been trifled with. The owner had been anxiously hunting about to find his gun; but the young Guy had too little time to succeed. It fell into the hands of the enemy. Mr. Leat fished up the piece from the weeds, a few rods distant from his mansion. His boys recognized it at once as the work of "Hi Powers." They knew that nobody else could ever make the patent fuse; for it could never have been recognized from the resemblance it bore in any other respect to its former self. So tremendous had been the explosion, it looked more like a bloated flounder than an instrument of war. The powder had twisted it into a semicircle, but it had not burst it open; which, in the minds of all reflecting people, did no little honor to the artist. I was, of course, ignorant of all this; but the grave looks of my father, as he called me up the next morning, boded very little good. Showing me the gun, at the sight of which I could not,

despite my fears, help laughing, he said : “ Hiram, this is no laughing matter. You must give an account of it, and I hope you will be able to vindicate yourself from the bad conduct laid to your charge ?”

Supposing he had become acquainted with my traffic in smuggled gunpowder and lead, I began to feel alarmed, and confessed to him everything but what he expected to hear ; assuring him, withal, as boys always do, that if he would let me off that time, I would never be caught in such a scrape again. The more active of the conspirators were examined, and detected, and this put an end to my operating in gunnery.*

* Mr. Clarke, the accomplished editor of the Knickerbocker, kindly put into my hands, while this work was going through the press, the “ SKETCH OF A SELF-MADE SCULPTOR :”—a racy and spirited account of Powers, written at his request in the spring of 1835, for the April number of the Knickerbocker of that year. The author of the sketch was the late B. B. Thatcher, Esq., one of those few men we could not spare so early ! Peace to his ashes—repose to his noble spirit ! We will not let his name be forgotten, and we thank him for this *first sketch* of the man Thorvaldsen called the Cutter of the Eve. We read it on some leaves of the Knickerbocker torn from their companions, as the gifted Willis Gaylord Clarke was taken from us—but we shall find him again in “ the better land,” where the Sybil’s leaves shall all be gathered at last.

This was the first sketch of any importance ever made of Powers in this country. I extract a few pages from it. They fill up very agreeably the crevices of the Sculptor’s early life :

Soon after this, the general failure of the crops in that part of Vermont produced a famine, which I

“ But there is a class of a different formation. These are the characters. They begin life with strong tendencies, the infallible effect of certain decided arrangements of the mind’s *matériel*. These are, or soon get to be, hard, beyond the plastic power. They are fitted only to fill one niche ; and that they will fill, if they find it, with a fitness so nice that everybody must say, who sees them : ‘ This man is in his *element* at last ! ’ But as I remarked at the outset, there are numbers of people—and those of distinct developments too—who are obviously *out* of place. It must be so through accident, perversity, or other cause ; and this in despite of an instinct always given to such minds, for the finding of the food that suits them. It is in exact proportion to the strength of the propensity, and goes before it, as it were, catering like the lion’s jackal. But it is sometimes deceived, and very often disappointed. It is delayed also, almost always. Not one in a thousand of these people with a penchant are early favored with the means of its gratification by their position in life. It is better, probably, that they should not be, for reasons we have no time to dwell on. But be that as it will, it is curious to see how, if a man have the true vigor in him, which belongs to a true genius—a genius for anything,—how the impulse of its secret energy will prompt him on ; and how its divine discernment, through ignorance, poverty, discouragement, disaster, everything but despair,—will still guide him (as the blind man’s inevitable touch guides him), till, stage by stage, from time to time, he gets nearer and nearer to the destination for which Heaven designed him to grope through the world. You can see that he feels his approximation. He looks more cheerily, and walks with a brisker pace the weary pathway ; and when

doubt not many remember better than myself: for although we suffered a good deal, there were there-

he reaches at last, in the evening of his days, perhaps, the threshold of the house which was made for him, and the image of which had been shadowed in his mind long ago,—oh! it is like the door of the very home where he was born to him, and he rushes in, with the light of a new life in his old eyes, to feel the heat of his childhood's fireside, and to grasp the hands that fly to meet him, and to go out no more for ever!"

"Mr. Powers was born in a pleasant little village of Vermont,—a nest of a place, among green hills, on the banks of the Water Queechee, which is a twig of the White stream, which is a branch of the Connecticut. There was a meeting-house in the place, and a court-house, and a powder-house, and a school-house in every district, and a pound for the stray game. There was also a great business done at a tilt-hammer forge, over a fine 'privilege,' where 'the sweet waters meet,' in this Vale of Avoca: and our hero remembers resorting to this rendezvous of the sentimental, to try his hand in the iron-ical way, as among the earliest events of his life. He was an active little fellow, by all accounts; and as full of queer capers as an egg is of meat; and his patron, the blacksmith,—his shop being *one* of the places about town where caucuses and such things were held,—would not unfrequently suspend work (when there was nothing to do), to amuse the bystanders with betting on Hiram's ability to mount on top of the great T, a block they forge the rings upon, and lift it, with his own weight, from the floor. Ah! many's the pot of small beer the brawny old fellow has swallowed in that way. But of him, '*Nihil nisi bonum*?'—that is, 'Rest his bones!'"

'Charity begins at home, and I should have mentioned

sands who suffered more. Finding it very difficult to maintain his family upon his poor farm, and no

ere this that our hero was the eighth child in a family where there were seven brothers and two sisters (six of them being still living), and that his father was a farmer. He of course was brought up to the hoe. But he was slender and feeble at best, and never felt so poorly (I rather fancy) as when he was put to work: he confesses about as much as that. His mechanical keenness failed him, too, on these occasions, in an alarming manner, till, what with his weakness and all, his hoe would perhaps even fall from his hand, and he felt obliged to brace his nerves and restore his composure, in the refreshing airs of the blacksmith's forge. To speak in plain terms, he was considered not much better than the drone of the hive. Such is the meed of genius!"

"However, he was sent to school, and attended to it as well as most boys do, and acquired a common English education by the time he was thirteen, more or less,—counting always by the eclipse, in the absence of the family Bible. He found leisure, moreover, during this period, from seven or eight years up, to acquire, nobody knows how,—or to exercise, at least,—no inconsiderable skill in divers devices of handicraft. Drawing was among the number, and like Romney, and Raeburn, and Wilkie, in their day, he beat the boys far and near in the business of caricature and portraiture both,—on board-fences, old hats, the backs of his comrades, or slates,—with charcoal, chalk, pencil, or pen. There was great fun, you may be sure, in the little realm of the round school-house, when Hiram would slyly turn out, on his great slate, the favorite picture of a flock of rats chased over a precipice by a foraging party of dragons. The latter would be led on by what they call in school-sports a go-devil, prancing

brighter prospect opening for the future, my father determined to go to the West, and seek for a new

about in high horns, and a spear on the end of his tail. The dragons danced after him, like master, like men. The rats fled harum-scarum: some over the abyss, some half way round for the rear, some reining up and bracing on the last edge of the solid land, and all of them uttering their sentiments on this occasion through the aid of labels forth issuing from their lips."

"But this was the day of small things. He came to be the owner of a jack-knife—an era in a boy's life. Old hoes, and rakes, and forks were fashioned into shapes fitter for his purpose, and doubtless the man of small beer might occasionally be liberal to him in rusty tit-bits (of no service to himself). So he made mill-dams, waggons, and wind-mills—the best anywhere about: and the boys came to see him, of a Saturday afternoon, from every quarter. Among the rest was a wonderful mill, exceedingly improved by the addition, in some way, of the iron-monger's tilt-hammer on a small scale, but sufficiently ponderous, when the boys set up scores of them on every house, barn, and shed in the village, to discourse such music as kept the country awake in the night for miles around; and so the 'patent wind-mill' went speedily out of fashion. Hiram turned his attention to casting pewter and lead into cannon and anchors, and supplying the whole navy of the Water Queechee. There was a pond behind his father's house, with a swampy shore on one side, divided by a board-fence; and here the young marines would muster in all weathers. They had their sham-fights, too. They would set trains with a slow match, let loose the craft, and follow them up on one side till the battle came on of itself. On one occasion, our hero relates, that his eagerness made him forgetful that the once balls with

home where an elder brother of mine had gone some years before. My father was not a man to

which the guns were filled, might possibly reach to the shore. In the midst of the fight he heard a whizzing over his head, and turning round noticed that a ball had passed through an inch board behind him,—whereupon a change came o'er the spirit of his game; he waded back through the swamp, and not increasing his glee much by treading with bare feet on the back of a huge mud-turtle, he returned demurely to work at his casting. This he was paid for in ammunition, lead, powder, and so on, pounds and pounds of which the little fellows would bring loose in their hats on their heads. Where it came from is no concern of mine; and anybody may guess what it came to."

* * * * "Farmer Powers 'moved' to Ohio when Hiram was thirteen or fourteen, and he went with the rest of the family. The circumstances of that event, though important to the actors in it, and sufficiently picturesque to excite some interest in general readers, will be readily conceived by such of them as some fifteen years since happened to reside in any part of New England where what was called the 'Ohio fever' prevailed. From this time he was destined for a rough life of it. For a year or two he worked on a farm rented by two of his brothers, a few miles out of Cincinnati. Then he went into the city, and read some law, and some Latin, with another of the family who was in the profession. But finding that the 'Viri Romæ,' though very clever fellows, were like to be a long while getting his bread for him, and ambitious to do something for himself, he set up a reading-room, under the encouragement of a patron, who, like most patrons, soon afterwards backed out; upon which *he* starved out, and the business fell through so shabbily, that for some months after he felt much as he used to at home, after

hesitate long about the course he ought to take, nor to delay the execution of his purpose. We packed

the constable had dragged him through the village to the 'Squire's house,' for helping the boys to knock out a little unnecessary glass in the windows of the old school-house. However, a Yankee is not easily outwitted by fortune, or any other woman, and Hiram went into a grain-store. There he remained a year or two. During all these changes he kept up his mechanics. At length his skill came under the eye of Mr. Watson, the organ and clock-maker, who deceased recently, the owner of a large estate acquired in that line. He was set to work polishing organ stops, and finished them so nicely that the whole metallic department was shortly surrendered to him. Then he was sent out by his employer into the backwoods of Ohio, on a forlorn expedition to collect his wooden-clock debts."

* * * * "He went to clock-making after this, improving and inventing his own tools, as he found occasion,—one or two of which I believe are in use still, and much valued. He was in employment now, by the way, dignified at least by great names. Everybody remembers Ferguson's account of the first wooden watch he succeeded in making, enclosed, as he says, in a case 'very little bigger than a breakfast-cup,' and quite convenient, of course, for a dandy's fob. The Scot, also, before he went into the fine arts (portrait painting), like the Yankee, got his living for some time by clock-cleaning and making. Arkwright was early in that business; and so was Northcote (whose father lived by it), long after he began painting. I doubt if it was time lost for any of them. It was an approach, in each case, to the art by which they were afterwards immortalized. The manual skill was as serviceable as Inigo Jones' carpenter's was to him. Hogarth began with

up everything we had to take with us, and started with our own teams for the banks of the Ohio. I

silver-chasing, Banker with earthenware, Bird with painting tea-trays, and Sharp with engraving dog's collars. They all indicate the gradual sloping of the instinct of which I have spoken above."

"The drawing propensity had never slumbered in our clock-cleaner; the soul of the sculptor passed through all the forms of his metempsychosis, and the Cincinnati boys of that period will remember well the signs by which he was recognized."

* * * * "He made, among other things, the extraordinary apparatus so celebrated in the West under the name of the Infernal Regions—a show of shrewdness, in its way, which nothing has equalled in America, perhaps, with the exception of the works of Maelzel, who has expressed his great admiration of this. Of its character in other respects the description is not sufficient to enable me to speak. With the sin of verisimilitude it is probably not chargeable, being no representation of anything which mortal mind ever conceived before; but every audience of all who have given their thousands and thousands to see it, will attest the startling vitality and vigor which mark the looks, movements, and the whole aspect, indeed, of this singular collection. His fountains, also, at this establishment, have excited a just admiration; and his portraits in wax are unequalled."

* * * * "He will visit the North this season, and take off a few heads of citizens, and then go to Italy,—with the commission of Congress, we trust, for the busts of the Presidents. These he will take time for at his leisure, being well aware of the means of improvement to be found there: and like Banks, and Raeburn, and Flaxman, being so well established in another respect as to feel no press-

never shall forget the morning I left ; I sat in the hind end of the waggon, and watched the village as it faded away. The spire of the church was the last thing I saw, and I felt an emotion of mingled sadness and pleasure when I saw it for the last time. I was leaving my birth-place, which is a spot we always feel sad in parting from ; and till now there was no other place on earth I cared one straw for : here I had played and sported away my early days, dreamed about the future, and painted it all in hues of gold ; here I had first begun to reflect upon the enigma of life, and its mysteries ; what I should do, and how I should feel when I became a man, and could wander forth free over the wide world. In that distant valley of the Ohio, thought I, I shall

ing necessity of return. Sir Joshua told Flaxman, when he first met him after his marriage, that he was spoiled for an artist. Our sculptor is no believer in that doctrine. His heart is no ossification, however it may be his head,—and there is little need that it should be.

“ Powers, like Osgood, has had his fair share of being jostled about the world ; and it has done him good. Especially has it chipped out, as nothing but the chisel of sharp necessity can do, all the abeyant arrangement of faculties which were essential to his success. It is developed now like one of his own noble faces,—standing as firmly on the pedestal it was made for,—and looking as steadily too, as the man in marble, to the niche it is alike fitted to occupy, and able to adorn. His honors will be germane to his labors ; and we rejoice, for his country’s sake, and for his own, in the bright prospect of both, which awaits him.”

lead a new life ; it will be filled with abundant harvests that will generously repay the toil of my father. We may become rich, and my parents may sit down independent in their old age, with children and grand-children around them, to comfort their weary hearts, and repay them for a life-time of toil. Through the green old woods I will chase the wild deer, and wander alone in the midst of their solitudes. These were bright dreams, and I thought they would all be realized. But yet, when I looked back on the church spire shooting up into the clear morning sky, and gazed on the hill tops I had wandered over for the last time, and the pure river, whose banks I should tread no more,—I turned away my head and wept alone !

We passed the winter in the State of New York, in what was called the “Holland Purchase ;” and in the spring we journeyed on to Cincinnati. We soon after went to live on a farm near the city, and life seemed to open a brighter prospect. But it was all blighted by the loss of my father, who was seized with a violent disease, and died, almost without a warning. I now felt that I was thrown upon my own resources ; and I knew I had nothing to expect but from my own exertions. I had not a relative in the world able to help me, without great sacrifice. My health was poor, and I determined to leave the farm, where hoeing corn, digging potatoes, and rolling logs, was too severe work for my constitution : and I went to Cincinnati, where my elder brother

had been several years, and tried to find some occupation. Nothing would have been more to my taste than a country life, for brick walls never had much charm for me ; and I never was so happy in any part of my life, as when I was wandering through the woods alone ; or along the banks of some stream, thinking about the ten thousand things such scenes are apt to awaken. And I have ten thousand times thanked God in my very soul, that my early days were passed in the country, where my tastes and feelings were developed under the teachings of nature, whom I have found in after life to be the great master :—and I have often thought since, that if I have done anything worthy of being remembered in the history of my art, I have done it under the impulse of those tastes and feelings that were all developed in my boyhood, under the guidings of nature. But I shall have occasion to speak of this point again, for I consider it the great thing in life.

But in the country I could do nothing, and I had no other hope than to go to the town, where my kind and generous brother invited me. So I put on my best clothes, which, like the morals of some people, were no better than they should be, kissed my mother, and walked into Cincinnati, to seek, like Whittington, my fortune. But I made less headway at first than that lucky personage, and to tell the truth, had less capital to begin with ; for all my worldly possessions would hardly have bought a good rat-catcher. But I looked about, ready to catch

at the first chance that opened ; not to make my fortune, for that idea was soon disposed of, but to make my bread. I was ready to do anything, however humble it might have been, but I dreaded the thought of a life of toil only to get bread or money. It seemed to me there was a nobler life than a life of *mere* work. Toil I loved, if I could toil for something noble—something worth toiling for ; for in no portion of my life has there ever been any pleasure in thinking of doing nothing ; it's the most miserable business a man can follow. But next to it, the most dreadful life a man can lead, is that life of drudging work, which converts the muscles of a man into those of a brute, and accomplishes by it no higher purpose. No sight is more glorious than a man putting forth muscle and mind together in human effort ; such work alone makes his exertions more noble than those of the beast ; and there is no human pursuit where the two may not be united. At this time no employment would have been more satisfactory to me than something of a mechanical nature : and no sight was so beautiful to me as the harmonious movements of machinery. I well remember the first steamboat I saw in motion on the Ohio, and I never was so excited by any spectacle in my life. The heaving of those tremendous arms and levers, the grinding, crushing evolutions of the wheels filled me with an awful and overwhelming excitement ; I think I should not have been more deeply stirred to have seen a team of wild horses dragging

a chariot of war on to the shock of battle. I never, even from the first, saw any difficulty in machinery. I never saw a machine long enough to understand its principles, which I did not believe myself capable of reproducing, without consulting the original a second time. It seemed to me as easy and as simple a process to comprehend the movements of the most complicated machinery, as to understand the eddies and the dashings of flowing and falling water. It's all nature, mysterious force applied to her purposes ; but in a storm, with its flashings of lightning, and bursts of thunder, may be read all the secrets of the steam engine and the lightning rod ; and my only surprise on seeing the former was, that it had not been invented long before. But I could get no employment in any machine-shop, or manufactory, and I wandered about anxious and unhappy.

One day I went to the extravagant luxury of paying out a solitary quarter of a dollar I had in my pocket to see the Museum. But I have many times thought I never spent *all* the money I had so well. I saw *one* object in that museum which created a new and indescribable feeling in my mind. It woke up in my heart an emotion which was to become the absorbing passion of my life.—It was a *plaster cast of Houdon's bust of Washington*. I gazed on it a long time, and felt a strong desire to know the process by which it had been made. I returned the next day to see it, more, I think, for this reason even than for the high veneration I entertained for Wash-

ington himself. It would be difficult for me to describe the intensity of desire I felt for a long time to know all about this mysterious art ; for there was something in it that woke up a kind of feeling I had never known before. If at that time there had been set before me wealth and honor, on one side, and a place on the other where I could live among such works, and do what I pleased, with some one to guide me, I'm certain I should have chosen the latter. And could I have been told then that in a few years I should have had a studio of my own, and made busts with my own hands, I should have been the happiest boy in the world.

But I could get no information from any one there, and I had need of bread ; and I continued to wander about in search of employment. At last I found a situation in a Reading Room attached to the principal hotel in the city, where I was employed to file papers, go to the post-office, sweep the room, and help on the interests of the hotel as well as I could. This never amounted to much for the proprietor, but it was everything for me. I had no longer to think where and how I should get my bread, for this I was sure of at the hotel ; and I had time and opportunity to read the newspapers and reviews that came in every morning, and I overhauled them pretty thoroughly. I spent a portion of my time, too, in many little mechanical contrivances, and inventions, which I should have afterwards reduced to perfection had I had the means ; and I hope yet to

be able to do it; for I am certain I have the models of several machines which would be of great service in the different mechanic arts.

I also attempted to paint; and one day an old gentleman having discovered from some of my drawings what he was pleased to honor with the name, "a strong and decided propensity for art," he brought me a quantity of distemper colors in mussel shells, and I was not long unoccupied after he came. I dropped my inventions and began to daub. But I soon had to throw away my colors, for they were mixed with glue, and became so offensive that visitors to the Reading-Room complained; I could not absent myself from the Room, and I had of course turned it into a studio. I remained here until for want of support, and by the neglect of my employer, the Reading-Room went down; and I was reduced to so low estate I might, with great propriety, have been called *as ragged as the Leats*. I looked about again for a change of quarters which I hoped would bring with them a change of clothes; for I was literally destitute of a single decent garment. I soon found a situation in a Produce Store, the proprietors of which prefaced my engagement with them, by a new suit of clothes—and of a quality not to be despised at that epoch—they were *Kentucky Jeans*. I could now move about with more freedom and with less danger of exposing myself to the remarks of people who seemed to have quite a *penchant* for decent clothes. Here I remained,

and was well treated by the proprietors till the House failed. Adrift once more, I put out for another harbor. I soon found a "situation" in a similar establishment; but I had hardly got settled before the gentleman gave up that business in favor of another; for he had pursued several callings within a few years. He was a clock-maker, an organ builder, and a dealer in produce; and these three he had followed in succession, and I remained with him till he had made the routine, and, like my master, became of course a proficient at all—quite enough so at least for his purposes, with the addition of expertness in collecting old debts for clocks in the country, and taxes for a magistrate for whom I worked during a vacation in his service. I have been obliged to submit during my life to a fair share of disagreeable work, but I will say that this collecting tour was a little the most disagreeable of all occupations I have ever followed. It would have been enough to ride through briars and woods and brushes, and over by-paths leading through swamps, with bars and fences to let down, through corn-fields in search of out-of-the-way houses, in sun and in rain, all upon a *good* horse. But the one I had, though a horse of excellent intentions, was quite unable to carry them out—on account of divers bodily infirmities such as the sweeney, the spavin, and an occasional touch of the *botts*. He did well enough on a level, and was respectable at a hill—if not too steep. He was an ambitious horse, too, for he

would never descend to anything, but this might have been owing to the sweeney ; however this may have been, I was obliged to dismount at the top of a hill, and as he would not go down head-foremost, force him down tail-foremost. But this was not so serious a matter on a hill as I sometimes found it on the banks of streams I was obliged to ford. Here I had to dismount and follow him as I backed him down the descent, and got on as best I could in the bed of the stream. Fortunately this business lasted only seven or eight months, for had it continued much longer, instead of collecting any more debts for other people, I might have paid that great one myself which is the only one a man may safely omit taking a receipt for, as he'll never be called on to pay it the second time.

But I must tell you a robber story. Many a wild scene you know passes in those old woods. During this tour of collecting I had arrived one afternoon at a log tavern too early to stop for the night ; but it was nine miles to another house, and the road lay through a dense forest ; I should arrive long after nightfall and not unlikely encounter some danger, and I thought I would stop. I had a large sum of money in my saddle-bags, principally in silver, and as I dismounted the host took off the bags and seeming somewhat surprised at their weight, asked me if I would have them placed in some secure place. I replied I would carry them to my room as I wished to take out something for immediate use.

Two suspicious looking men were witnesses of all this, as they stood by the corner of the house leaning on their rifles, and it was evident I was the subject of their conversation, which was carried on in a suppressed voice, with more than one wink and shrug of the shoulder, which would not have come with an ill grace from an Italian bandit. There was no lock on my door and that looked a little suspicious, for I could have sworn, as I examined the door carefully on the inside when I retired, that a lock had been recently removed. But never being much given up to the control of my fancy at any period of my life, I half persuaded myself it was a groundless suspicion, and pulled off my clothes to go to bed. But I had not reasoned away my fears so completely as not to bethink myself of the means of defence in case of need. So I barricaded the door as well as I could with the few chairs and stools the room contained. But contrary to all expectation, not a noise was made around the premises all night and my testimony on this point ought to be pretty conclusive, for if there had been I think it more than probable I should have heard it. But I was not a little annoyed as I was preparing to start in the morning to see those same two men at the door leaning on their rifles. One of them stepped up, and with what seemed to me an affected manner, "Stranger," says he, "we seem to be going the same way, suppose we keep company, as the gals say—for I kinder reckon my legs won't fall much behind your beast's—I and this

neighbor I've fell in with are going down about half way to the next settlement, and then we go off the road for a hunt."

I didn't know exactly what to do, as you may well imagine. But I didn't hesitate long; neck or nothing, thought I; and so I replied, "Oh yes, company shortens the road: we'll go on together." The truth of the latter sentiment I felt the force of; for whether we went in company or not that time depended upon the walkers and not upon the rider. But there was no backing out; so off we started—one of the said gentlemen with a shouldered rifle walking on either side.

"Now," thinks I to myself, "is my principal chance. Go it, Rosinante!" But neither jerk, whip, nor spur could urge her into an inconvenient gait for my companions. It was a new road, through what was called the Beech-flats, where the soil being thin and resting upon a hard clay pan the roots formed a kind of web-work just beneath the surface, which the travelling had laid bare, and rendered dangerous for rapid movement. Finally they left me—one to the right and the other to the left, assuring each other as they did so that they would rendezvous at "Hog Hollow," which was not put down in the Geography I had studied. "Bandit Hollow," says I to myself, "you'd better call it." I now plied the implements of war upon my steed with increased activity, hoping I might gain upon the fellows, and defeat their infernal plot, which this *ruse de guerre*, or as we say in

Yankeedom, *sham*, only rendered still more evident. But I found the roots thicker and the mud deeper of course, just in proportion as my exigencies increased, and on the whole, all my twitching and spurring and beating only acted upon my beast, like so much friction in machinery to diminish the motion. The only living objects I saw for the next mile or two were a large flock of wild turkeys standing on a log with the gobbler strutting before them; a moment after, a slight noise in the woods to my right, gave me an involuntary start. The bushes moved and the sticks cracked—Rosinante stopped short and began to prick up her ears, and for the first time in many years, perhaps, assumed a somewhat spirited attitude. I looked steadily, and saw a cap moving slowly from behind a tree, at less than a rifle-shot. It was followed by just enough of a man's face to give me a glimpse of his eye. I felt my hair lift my hat from my head. Suddenly the cap dodged behind the large tree. I knew escape was impossible, and it being more honorable to receive a bullet before than behind, I determined to await the result where I was. In a moment or two the cap and face appeared again with the end of the rifle pointed pretty nearly in my direction. "Fire away, my boy!" thought I, "you must be a great shot if you miss." The cold sweat ran down my breast, and even Rosinante trembled. I looked as steadily, however, towards the man as though my life depended on dodging his bullet. He beckoned to me with his

hand to go on ; but I shook my head with a sort of an expression which I intended should say, "Blaze away where I am ! for a few paces to the north or south make very little difference to me in the place I fall." The man repeated the gesture with a dreadful, I might say, an infernal expression on his face, and then pointed with his finger to some object on the other side of the road. I looked slowly round, expecting to receive a ball from him or one from his murderous companion opposite to him ; but you may judge of my surprise when I saw instead, *six fine deer nearly in a line with me, and the man skulking behind the tree*. I saw through the *plot* of the hunters in a flash. "Well," said I, as an involuntary blush burned on my cheek, "aint it strange I should make such an extraordinary ass of myself?" I put spurs to Rosinante, and had hardly got clear of the shot of the honest hunter before I heard a rifle-ball whistle by me, which struck a fine buck just about the instant I heard the report. The deer made a single leap and fell dead. "So much," says I, "for the difference between an honest *hoosier hunter* and a highwayman !" It shows what suspicion will do when once excited ; but I must confess suspicion was pretty natural under the circumstances.

When I returned from this clock pilgrimage and went back again to the clock factory, I felt as I imagine some of Dante's characters must have felt when they came out all singed from his *Inferno*. I was set to work repairing some of the machinery for

making clocks, and a considerable part of the time I was making clocks myself. But I was occupied, more to my satisfaction, upon machinery for others to use; and I introduced several important labor-saving improvements which are generally adopted, I am told, in all similar manufactories. In this business I was brought into intercourse with several clock-pedlars, and I can certify to the truthfulness of the character Haliburton has drawn of Sam Slick, for I have known a pedlar who might have stood for the model.

This business pleased me much better than collecting debts, although I was not at all satisfied with it; for it was monotonous. The buzzing of saws for ten or twelve hours a day just under my nose and the dust from the wooden wheels cut away, certainly had little affinity with art. But I did not at that time really know what I wanted; for I had never yet had any opportunity of studying sculpture, or of even seeing the process of making a statue or a bust.

I finally heard of a Prussian who was engaged on a bust of Gen. Jackson, who was stopping in Cincinnati a few days on his way to or from the Capital. I obtained an introduction to him and was astonished at the simplicity of the operation of modelling—a mass of clay on a stool and a number of small sticks of various shapes, made out of box-wood, comprised the whole apparatus. But the old gentleman had as yet had no occasion for the sticks; for by means of his fingers alone he had modelled the clay into

something like a human head; the sticks, he told me, would be useful only in the details when his fingers would be too clumsy to operate by themselves. I went often to see him, and was extremely interested; but I did not dare to criticise his work, although I thought I could discover great errors in it. The neck was extremely short, the eyes sunk too deep in the head, the head itself too large, and the hair anything but Gen. Jackson's; still it bore a resemblance to him. In the meanwhile I determined to make a trial myself, and anticipating that on my first work, occupied as I was in other matters, I should consume much time, I concluded to work in wax instead of clay; and accordingly I procured several pounds of beeswax, and in melting it, stirred in a quantity of coloring matter to render it sufficiently opaque. When it was all prepared, I began a reduced copy of a head of the Venus de' Medici which some Italian plaster-worker had brought to Cincinnati. I had a little apartment in the garret of the clock-factory which I used for a *studio*. A gentleman to whom I showed this work was so well pleased he desired me to make a bust of his daughter only four years old. This gentleman was Mr. John P. Foote. This head, too, I did in wax, and finished it as I had the other, in the garret of the clock-factory; and I can say, with all honesty, that when I compare it with other busts I have made, that so far as the likeness and finish of it are concerned, I have never surpassed it, nor could I improve it now, if I except

some portions of the hair. This was my *first order*, and I received for it all I asked, which was deemed a very reasonable sum by the child's father, who assured me it would give him pleasure to pay me more if I would consent to receive it. The work was finished in plaster, and my price for it was twenty-four dollars.

I was now fully determined to be a sculptor; but I found I had no great prospect of success in Cincinnati, and it was a long time before I found another person to give me an order. In the meantime I became acquainted with the proprietor of the Western Museum, who told me he had lately received a quantity of New Haven wax-figures he had purchased from a broken-down showman. "They are," said he, "in a mutilated state, but I doubt not you can put them in order." I had little time to spare, and could not leave the factory to go to the Museum; but I promised him if he would send them up to my studio, I would see what I could do with them. I was not at home when they arrived.

When I came back I found them lying on the floor of the garret, the heads without bodies, the latter being reserved at the Museum. I could not help laughing at their singular juxta-position when I entered. Napoleon Bonaparte was kissing the bearded visage of Lorenzo Dow—Gen. Washington was whispering in the ear of a beggar some matter of state—and John Quincy Adams appeared to be

breathing soft nonsense under the long tresses of Charlotte Temple, who, strange to say, was greatly distressed at his confessions. I've forgotten about the rest, but it is enough to say that the sight was a burlesque on all sculpture. Some had broken noses, others cracked skulls, and the moths had made sad havoc with the wigs and beards and eye-brows of the whole company. To have restored them to their pristine state would have been an endless job, and probably have proved a failure in the end.

Soon after I had finished my survey, Mr. Dorfeuille came in.

"Well, Mr. Powers," said he, with a smile, "do you think it a total destruction?"

"Oh, no!" I replied, "not exactly; they are in rather a deplorable state though, it must be confessed."

"Some of them can be saved, then, you think?" he added; and I was not a little shocked to hear him say he intended to send the rest to *Hell!* for the famous Mrs. Trollope, then in Cincinnati, accompanied by a French artist (?) had suggested to him a plan of an exhibition of the Infernal Regions of Dante. The painter had undertaken to do his share of the work. Mr. D. thought I might be able to get up the mechanical portions; and he proposed I should come at once and take up my quarters in the Museum. This plan seemed an improvement at least upon clock-making, and I accepted his proposal.*

* This is all Mrs. Trollope had to do with making

While this exhibition was being prepared, I transformed the head of the beggar into a *cannibal*. A body for him was made out of a stuffed sack, which had formerly constituted the corporation of Napoleon ; we covered it with a wolf-skin ; in the monster's hands were placed two weapons of death, and in other respects he was prepared for his introduction to the Christian community of Cincinnati, and everything made ready for the consummation.

Mr. Dorfeuille now put forth an astounding hand-bill, giving a sober history of his capture in the Caribbean Islands, by some bold ship's crew, who had brought him to the United States. He had been secretly procured by the proprietor, at an expense which would prove absolutely ruinous, unless he was generously sustained, as he doubted not he should be, by a grateful public, &c., &c.

This immense hand-bill was carefully perused by many a group at the corners of the streets, with all due gravity. The wise shook their heads and looked very incredulous, but on the whole the cannibal seemed likely to meet with a warm and enthusiastic reception. Crowds came to see the spectacle, and I was surprised to find how few regarded it as a wax figure ; for the majority really seemed to think it a Simon-Pure, preserved by some embalming process. Not a few of our country patrons declared it was Powers a sculptor ; and yet she has spread the story, and it has gone currently over Europe, that she first called Powers' attention to the art of sculpture.

really alive (for they saw his eyes move); and, on the whole, the impression seemed to be almost universal, that no distinguished foreigner had ever met so enthusiastic a greeting in the queen city. And I must confess I was one of the number.

I was occupied in the Western Museum in all about seven years, arranging the exhibitions already made, or getting up new ones. But I consumed a great part of my time in *the Infernal Regions*, which perhaps succeeded about as well as any humbug ever got up in "those diggins." I always had in view the means of going to Italy, and I could see no way more likely to crown my wish with success than the Museum afforded me. But several casualties conspired one after another to destroy my plan.

About two years after entering the Museum I made an effort to go abroad, aided by the liberality of my friend, Mr. Nicholas Longworth; but after reaching New-York, and obtaining permission to go on a public vessel, as I thought, free of expense, I was informed that the government afforded only a *passage* to a foreign port for artists and professional men, but I must find myself in everything, even to my hammock. The ship was just ready to sail. I had no time to write home for further assistance; and in counting my means I found I should be left in Gibraltar without money enough to take me to Florence. And besides, I felt little disposed to go on board a public vessel already crowded, and thus put the midshipmen with whom I should mess, to inconvenience;

while I should be *indebted* to government for a free passage to Italy, and expend a considerably larger sum than it would cost me in any other way. All these reasons induced me to return to Cincinnati, with the intention of making another attempt as soon as possible.

One of the first persons I saw on my return was the proprietor of the Museum, who made me such offers as induced me to wait till I should have ample means of my own to effect my purpose. But events which I need not mention again blasted my hopes.

At last I determined on taking some other course to raise the necessary funds, and I consulted the same friend who had generously endeavored to assist me before. He proposed to see the first men of the city, and get them to unite in a scheme for sending me abroad, with commissions for their busts, which I was to model at once, and receive one half the payment in advance, and the remainder when they were done. I had already made several busts from time to time, by which my ability in my art might be estimated. But this scheme failed, for only three besides himself could be found willing to subscribe to the plan. But I determined on making his bust at any rate, and I did; and when it was done he told me he would send me abroad himself, and if I wished to go to the East and try my fortune there, I could do so as soon as I pleased, and he would see my interests cared for in Cincinnati (for I had a wife and family now); and that I should not want for

support while I was gone. I accepted this generous proposal, and reached Washington just before Congress met in 1835, taking with me letters of introduction to several distinguished men.

I did not expect any commissions immediately. All I hoped for was to obtain a reputation as an artist; and I began with a bust of General Jackson, who consented in the kindest manner to sit. He took the precaution, however, first of all, to ask me if it was my practice to put plaster on the face to get an impression of the features. On my replying in the negative, he said he was very glad, for he had heard of the manner in which Mr. Jefferson had been taken by Mr. Browere. "And for my part," said he, "I should not like to be tortured, or have my ears pulled off, as was the case with that great man when he was obliged to go through with that dreadful process."

He showed me an apartment next his sitting-room, where he said I might arrange my materials. In two days my clay was prepared. The old General entered, and going to a shelf at one end of the room he took down a long-tailed pipe from one box, and charged it with cut tobacco from another. Pipe in order, he took his seat, and remained with me for about an hour, and during most of the time he smoked and said but little. He was sitting before a window which fronted the Capitol, and I noticed he took off his spectacles and held them some distance from his face and looked some time in the direction of the

Capitol Hill. At last, with an expression of impatience, he exclaimed :

“ I thought so !—Boys, Mr. Powers, boys !—they are going to have a holiday.”

I did not understand this ; and perceiving it, he pointed to a flag-staff on the Capitol.

“ Don't you see,” said he, “ the flag is down. They have adjourned over till Tuesday or Wednesday. Congress has just met. That's the way they do. They are all leisure now, and they neglect the public business ; but you'll find when the session is drawing to a close all will be hurry and confusion, and Congress will break up leaving much important business undone.”

He then knocked the ashes out of his pipe, and laying it on the mantel-piece, he wished me good day, without taking the slightest notice of my work. I was glad of this, for I had yet done but little, and certainly in its then state it had no very promising appearance.

The next day he was engaged, and could not come. The day after he came in and apologised for having neglected me. “ It was not intentional, Mr. Powers,” he remarked, “ but important business prevented me from coming. I'm very sorry, for I know your time is precious.”

I was deeply struck with this remark ; for how true it is, that none but men who have made the most of their time know what time is worth !

He again charged his pipe, and smoked till he

almost fell asleep, notwithstanding frequent efforts to rally himself. He appeared exhausted, but he would have sat the whole time, I doubt not, had I not told him I could proceed without him.

“I’m glad,” he replied, “for I am not well to-day, but I will try to sit better for you to-morrow.”

The day following, as he laid down his pipe on the mantel-piece, when he was leaving, I asked him if he would give me the pipe he had been using. It was a common clay pipe, although it would have been esteemed a Jackson pipe, perhaps.

“Why, Mr. Powers,” said he, with a smile, “it is a valueless thing, and not worth your taking : but I have a very beautiful pipe in the other room, made by an Indian, and I would give it to you with great satisfaction if you would take it.”

I replied, it was not the Indian’s pipe, but General Jackson’s pipe I wanted.

“Ah, well, Sir,” he replied, with a laugh, “you shall have it with all my heart.” He then took it from the mantel-piece, and stepping forward, presented it to me with all that dignity and elegant courtesy of manner, of which he was so perfect a master when the occasion called for it.

Just before I finished the bust, Major Donaldson paid me a visit, as he had done often before during the progress of the work, and he remarked that perhaps I had copied the peculiarities of the mouth too faithfully ; alleging that the General had lost his teeth, or rather, laid them aside, and that his mouth

had fallen in, which left him, in that respect, unlike his former self. But I liked the expression of his mouth, even as it was; for it's a remarkable fact, that when nature is defeated by age, accident, or infirmity, of her original design, she will still find some means of reproducing it, and such is particularly the case with General Jackson. The same firmness and inflexibility of character his mouth expressed in the prime of life, is to be found there still, though the forms are entirely changed. It's an error to suppose that features are accidental, and nature makes them up at hap-hazard; for the face is the true index of the soul, *where everything is written, had we the wisdom to read it*. We can and we do read its mysteries by instinct, and we form an estimate of a man's character from the first impression of his features, though we may not know how this is done,—the heart, and not the understanding, reads it. The truth is, the mind forms the features after its own fashioning, and they vary, as a man's character varies. This any one may know who has attentively watched the progress of innocence to vice, or of vice to reformation; the features keep pace with the progress of the character.

The suggestion of Major Donaldson was kind, but I did not think it advisable to act upon it. I determined, however, to mention it to General Jackson, and ascertain what he thought about it.

“Make me as I am, Mr. Powers,” he replied, “and be true to nature always, and in everything.”

It's the only safe rule to follow. I have no desire to *look* young as long as I *feel* old : and then it seems to me, although I don't know much about sculpture, that the only object in making a bust is to get a representation of the man who sits, that it shall be as nearly as possible a perfect likeness. If he has no teeth, why then make him *with* teeth ?”

This was the last sitting, and he stood before the bust and examined it for the first time.

“ But after all I've said,” he continued, “ of course, I'm no judge. I don't profess to understand these things. I can't judge either, perhaps, so well of my own likeness as I could of another's. But Col. Earl can tell more about it, and I advise you to get him to look at it.”

He then bade me adieu, wishing me every success with my *picture*.

I have never had a more striking subject for a bust than General Jackson ; and I even doubt if the whole range of subjects would furnish another like it.

I had no difficulty in obtaining the consent of most of the public men I applied to, to model them busts, as soon as their time would admit. Webster, Adams, Calhoun, Col. Preston, Col. Johnson, with several others, not only sat for their busts, but did a great deal to serve me ; and I certainly feel for all those gentlemen, and many others with whom I was then brought into intercourse, without distinction of party, the highest admiration.

To a friend who applied to Mr. Webster in my

behalf for a sitting, he said, he was warmly attached to art and artists, and would not only sit for me, but do all in his power to prevail upon others to give me commissions. I am but too happy to say that I afterward had ample proofs of the sincerity of that great statesman. He could not sit in Washington, but he said to me, "Come to my farm, at Marshfield, my dear Sir, and I will try to make you comfortable, and give you as many sittings as you want. We shall be in a better frame to appreciate art; there we are in the country, with cool breezes from the Pilgrim seas, and we can enjoy ourselves so much better than we can here among these brick houses and *politicians*."

There was a peculiar emphasis laid upon this last word, which kept me laughing the rest of the day.

Not long after I visited him at his country seat, and I number the few days I spent there among the happiest of my life. I have never been in the presence of a man who left upon my mind an impression of such intellectual power. No familiarity with him ever abated this feeling. He always made me think of Michael Angelo's gigantic statues; natural, but one of nature's exaggerations; out of her common way of working, but still her own work.

He sat for me often, till I felt I had done all I desired to do with his head. All artists who have copied Mr. Webster's features, have complained of him as a sitter; and I found him at times a little impatient, although he was always kindly. But he

would get almost to sleep, for it was too dull a business for such a man to sit still and do nothing. He often became drowsy, and at such times his features lost much of his expression, especially his mouth, which became entirely changed. His under-jaw fell back, and the lower lip and the chin fell with it. Several likenesses of him have failed in the mouth, and I am satisfied this has been the principal cause. To avoid this danger I modelled at the mouth during the first moments of the sittings, and as his features began to lose something of their expression I worked upon those portions of the head least affected by the change. My object was to give an animated likeness of Mr. Webster, and to judge of it fairly, one must see him while engaged in earnest conversation.

I esteemed it a great advantage as well as a great pleasure to be thus admitted to the society of such a man, and I left him not only with a feeling of gratitude and admiration, but with even a more lofty conception of his genius and goodness than before. When I took his hand and felt his hearty iron pressure as he told me his doors were always open to me, I could not control my feelings; I said in my heart, "God bless thee, great man!"

I have reason to believe that through Mr. Webster's influence, and other friends around Boston, I received several commissions for busts which I have since executed. I experienced, too, from a large number of distinguished men of all parties, warm and

generous greetings and welcomes, which inflamed in my heart a still deeper desire to contribute in some humble manner to the perpetuation of their fame by means of the art of sculpture, when we shall all be dead. At last I met one whose unmerited kindness and generosity put at once into my hands the means of coming to Europe. I forbear to mention his name, as I am persuaded this was never done with the intention of having it generally known. It was one of those princely acts which flow from feelings and impulses so noble, the man who performs them would rather they should be withheld from the public gaze.*

* Although Mr. Powers, with a delicacy which forms the great charm of his character, withheld even from myself, in these conversations, the name of his generous patron, yet I have since had occasion to learn who this gentleman was, and although I am persuaded he would shrink from seeing his name in this connection, yet I feel it due to art that its true friends be known. I justify myself on this occasion by that beautiful sentiment of Plato: "The knowledge of the generous deeds of the few should become the common possession of mankind, for they stimulate us to a more sublime virtue." We are told that one of the Divinities of Greece, who had protected a city, prostrated his own image, in the midst of a night tempest, from the temple raised to his honor; and the action was, perhaps, worthy of a god. But it is wisely ordered that a knowledge of great and generous deeds cannot be withheld from mankind for ever. And in America, where Art never can reach any point of eminence or glory without the fostering care of the cultivated and the gene-

Three or four months before the death of Chief Justice Marshall I modelled his bust. It occurred to me in standing in the Supreme Court Room looking at the busts of former Chief Justices that adorn that venerable place, that I might obtain an order from the Government for executing his bust in marble, and I consulted one of the Representatives from Ohio on the subject, and requested him to do me the kindness to introduce a resolution to that effect. But he told me the proper course would be for me to send in a memorial to Congress myself. I must confess I did not like this plan, for it appeared to me the measure ought to originate in Congress itself and not be the work of a private individual. Still, as this was the advice of a member of Congress whom I had every reason to esteem a friend, I waived my own opinion and allowed myself to do an act of which I have been ashamed a thousand times. I signed a memorial to Congress to allow me to execute a bust of Chief Justice Marshall. It was referred to the Committee on the Library, who reported unanimously in favor of it, and of me as the artist.

This commission is the only one I have ever received from the Government, if I except an order for a bronze *jet d' eau* I made for the fountain in front of the Capitol. My object in applying for this rous, such a noble name shall not be concealed. The name of this patron of *American* art is (Col.) John S. Preston, of South Carolina.

was to induce Congress to give me a commission for a fountain in marble or bronze on a magnificent scale, to be placed in front of the Capitol; and I hoped that when they saw the effect that might be produced with a greater quantity of water, they would take the matter up. I should have constructed one on a plan I have long had in contemplation, which I think would have met with general approbation.*

* Mr. Powers has communicated to me this design for a fountain in marble and bronze, which would probably be superior to anything of the kind either ancient or modern. And he might long ago have rendered his name as illustrious in Europe by its connection with this branch of art as he has already made it by his statues and busts. At one time he was on the point of relieving his embarrassment by submitting this beautiful design to one of the European Governments, which would have been sure to accept it at his own price. A fortunate circumstance occurred which relieved him from his embarrassment at the time, and he was but too glad to reserve his design for the time when his own Government will be ready to commission the work. He assured me that this fortunate occurrence gave him the greatest satisfaction; for otherwise he would have been obliged to offer to a foreign Government a design he hopes will one day be executed for his own country. It combines in a new way all the beauties of water falling—dashing over sculptured marble and bronze. One of the first artists of Italy, who knows of the design, assured me that in his opinion (and he is as well qualified, perhaps, to judge of such a work as any man living) it would, in every respect, be a more beautiful artistic work than any by the ancient or modern masters,

These *jets* were not intended as permanent works, but as tests of my ability to construct similar designs.

uniting as it does all the beauties of classic fountains and classic groups in a manner never attempted to his knowledge. And yet this superb work could be executed for a comparatively trifling sum.

I doubt not that many a citizen of New York will exclaim at once, why not have Powers make this Fountain for the Park? And certainly no city in the world has better deserved it than the one which voted its own millions for the Croton Aqueduct. It will not be forgotten that a considerable number of men who have made a good deal of noise in New York, opposed that noble work, and did what they could to inflame popular prejudice against it. An appeal was made to the people—to the men who were to drink the water and pay roundly for it, too, and over the heads of intriguing politicians (glad enough to drink Croton now, and quite noisy they were, too, in the celebration) this stupendous measure was carried. A fine rebuke was thus administered to those men who are so fond of taking care of the interests of the people who know so poorly how to do it for themselves! It has been maintained to the honor of the citizens of New York in distant parts of the world.

Now let that glorious crystal column which comes dashing wildly up through the park, with its wealth of waters, careering through the air like the strong wild bird of our forests; that flies about with his “superfluous strength,” he knows not where;—be trained to rush, and leap, and fall, and flow, as the genius of the sculptor may guide it, and when the European lands on our shores, he will declare it is the most beautiful thing in the world. I could never make another man know how I felt as I came up Broadway one hot day last sum-

But they have failed to produce the effect I desired, for I have never heard from them since except through a speech from a member of Congress complaining of the extravagance of the Government in throwing away the People's money upon *squirts*, as the learned gentleman was pleased elegantly to call them. I therefore gave up all hope of anything in the way of fountains for the Capitol. Fortunately I am now sufficiently occupied, and have no need of making fountains at all. I dare say I might have secured a commission which was at that time given to a foreign gentleman, at the Capitol, had it suited my purpose to adopt the measures by which he succeeded.*

mer, just after landing from Europe, and saw that superb column of foaming waters leaping up towards heaven. It seemed, like the column on Bunker Hill, to be in another way a fit emblem of the nation. In its wild free dashings, in its inexhaustible treasures of water, that fountain was the spirit of the new world. But like this rude, gigantic continent, it needs that the cunning hand of art be laid upon it. If the people of New York could see Powers' statues, I doubt not the party which should propose twenty-five, or even fifty thousand dollars of the city treasure, for a fountain by him in marble and bronze would gain their issue triumphantly. I may be mistaken, but so much stronger is my confidence in the generous impulse of the many, than in the jugglery of the few, I venture the assertion; and one day may show that I do not trust my fellow-citizens in vain.

* Mr. Powers did not tell me at the time the name of this gentleman, and I have written above all he said. I am not bound by any obligation I am aware of to suppress

But I let all that pass. The facts are sure one day to be made public, and I shall find all the vindication I wish in a publication of the truth. I feel perfectly quiet on the subject of the slanders and insidious intrigues that have been resorted to in America by foreign Artists, to ruin me utterly. But I feel no disposition to enter into any collision with those gentlemen. I am certain, like all men, to have justice done me at last. Trying to conduct myself in a manner which fears no investigation, but rather courts it, I follow on the course I long ago marked out, and shall follow it to the end. Every honest man is safe. It is one of the conservative principles of God's good Government, that virtue shall not suffer in the long run. Honesty is the best policy; the honest man will not lack vindicators; and he can afford to wait for them. The battle between

some facts in this work, which bear upon this point, and I shall publish them, for I feel it to be due to the American People to tell them of the impositions that have been resorted to by a class of foreign adventurers in our country, calling themselves "sculptors and artists of the very highest genius," head and shoulders above even Canova and Thorvaldsen! I reserve these facts for another portion of my work, where my motives for their publication will fully appear, and where I trust I shall be acquitted by every impartial reader, of injustice to any man, and above all injustice to those foreigners, who have taken shelter from foreign tyranny under the broad shield of American Liberty.

truth and falsehood is a long one—but truth can afford to wait—

“ The eternal years of God are her's.”

At last, all the obstacles that had obstructed my coming to Europe were suddenly dispersed by that only magical wand of our times, and I am inclined to think of former ones too, and eight years ago I landed in Florence, to begin late in life the means of supporting my family, and establishing as I will honestly confess I hoped to, an honorable fame.

I had modelled a great number of busts in America, but, with the exception of a very few, they had not been commissioned. I was unfortunate in not receiving these busts for a long time, for they did not reach Florence till I had been here several months. In the meantime, Professor Farrar, of Cambridge, Massachusetts, was residing in Florence, and he engaged his bust. I executed it, and also that of a lady he had the goodness to introduce in my studio.

When my busts arrived from America I prepared my studio, arranged everything for operations, and looked about for workmen. I got a man to blocking out and two others at *finishing* so called, but in reality anything else; for, in some instances, I had more work to do after their work was done, than I should have had to have done the whole. In other instances, they utterly ruined my marble, and I had to throw it away. I had been informed that in Italy

good finishers were easily found, and for the price of common laborers in America; that they worked so well the Artist had little to do but provide the models. But I soon discovered my mistake. I had looked through the studios of the best sculptors, and I had many misgivings, for I did not find the men I wished. The best workmen were pointed out to me, and I procured some of them, but I saw they would ruin everything. I now began to despair—for instead of \$30 which I had been informed by Italian sculptors in America would be the cost of executing a bust in marble, I should be obliged to pay nearer \$130. I sent away my men,* and took up the mallet and chisel, and went to work upon Prof. Farrar's bust. My blocker-out had absolutely spoiled everything; cutting away an eighth of an inch too much from noses and chins.

“What do you mean?” I asked of the workman; “You have cut away an eighth of an inch too much from the very end of this man's nose?”

* And yet one of these workmen was a sculptor who had been pronounced by more than one American newspaper to be one of the greatest sculptors in the world!! Even malignity itself could not misinterpret Powers' motives in this affair, although such an attempt has been made. At that time, he only wanted workmen, and it is certain he would not have sent away any man who could have rendered him any aid. It would moreover have been a credit to him to have had a sculptor among his workmen, had he been a man of any merit. Those for whose benefit this note is written, will understand it.

“ Oh Signore,” he said, with an Italian shrug—
“ Questa non fa nulla—è poco” (Oh, Sir, that’s
nothing—it’s only a trifle).

“ But did your master allow you to treat his
busts in that way ?”

“ Oh ! why, yes—he didn’t think anything of so
slight a variation.”

I doubt not he spoke the truth. At least my
subsequent observations confirmed his words—I sent
off even my blocker-out.

“ This must be a glorious seat for the Arts,” says
I to myself, “ where blockers-out spoil the likeness.”

At last I got a finisher who had been one of Bartolini’s (regarded as the best Italian sculptor in Tuscany). I set him to work upon an ideal piece which would be of little consequence if he ruined it, and in the meantime I kept my eye on him. But fearing I must rely chiefly upon my own mallet, I went to work upon the busts of Gen. Jackson, Prof. Farrar, Mr. Webster, and J. Q. Adams, and finished them entirely with my own hands, retouching as occasion might require the work of my finisher, who was getting on pretty well, and soon astonished me by the superior beauty of his work ; for my hopes had been so entirely annihilated, I was ready to be surprised at any display of what seemed to me the workmanship that ought to be put on marble.

I was obliged, however, to pay this workman high wages, which increased my expenses ; and I

discovered to my great regret, that while I was finishing a bust I had engaged for \$300, I was out of pocket, with all the economy we could muster, nearer \$500, and but for the aid of my generous friends, I should never have been able to finish the commissions undertaken. For being determined not to allow a work to leave my studio till it was as perfect as I could make it, I had to put three or four times more expense upon it than is usually done. The temptation was great to slight my work ; but my motives not to do so, were much stronger, and I shall always feel the force of them. The only advantage I've had from those busts I undertook for \$300, has been the instruction they afforded me while at work on them, and I don't regret the pecuniary loss they occasioned. But long before they were finished, as I could spare time, I engaged myself upon an ideal work.

I thought it expedient in selecting a subject, to choose one which would afford me some advantage when exhibited, if I failed to find a purchaser. I looked through the range of subjects, and advanced without stopping, till I arrived at the primitive better half of the human race. And thinking mankind would have a curiosity to see how their first mother looked when she was committing that great error which involved us all in so much trouble, I began my EVE, fully aware how dangerous a subject it was to begin upon, for one who had never modelled a statue. But the occasion was strong, the circum-

stances urgent, and I had no alternative but to give up all and return home. I first went to work on a small model eighteen inches high, and worked four months. Being satisfied of the position and general effect, I began on a large scale, abandoning my work occasionally to make a bust. Among others, while Eve was in the mill, I made busts of Mrs. Bennett (an English lady), Mr. Low, of New York, Mr. Urquart, of New Orleans, John Slidell of the same city, &c., &c.

From the time I began till I finished my Eve, three years passed—but my interruptions were numerous. Among others, I was obliged to move my studio, and the dangerous operation was to be performed of carrying the model of the Eve half a mile; the least jar would ruin the labor of many months. I constructed an apparatus for the purpose, and hanging the statue in *gimbals*, which left it swinging gently in all directions, four strong men bore it safely to its new destination. It was the first time such a thing had been done, and several artists said it would be an impossibility. My mechanical acquirements served me on this occasion, as indeed they have done on many others, enabling me particularly to make many tools and instruments not in common use—among others, extremely delicate files, for giving the last finish to the marble. Indeed, if I had not been able to make these things for myself, I don't know what I should have done, for this is a dreadful country to get anything made;

there seems to be an utter impossibility in the way of having any instrument made except tools of the simplest description. Why ! I was obliged to send for a simple turning-lathe (of iron) to England. Not a workman in Italy could make it.*

The Eve had already attracted considerable attention and brought many visitors to my studio. I already considered the statue engaged ; but the crash in America changed the circumstances of many persons, and among them the gentleman who had given me the order. I was made acquainted with the facts, and knowing his honorable intentions, I willingly released him from the obligation.

Just before the clay model of Eve was done, I received the honor of a visit from the great THORVALSDEN. He was passing through Florence on his way to Rome, and had but a short time to spend, and this he wished to pass with his friends. But being strongly urged by a gentleman who had been often at my studio, he consented to drop in for a moment. The first intimation I had of his visit was from a servant, who came hastily into my studio and

* I found in Mr. Powers' studio several exceedingly useful instruments of his own invention, hitherto entirely unknown in the history of sculpture—and yet it seems impossible to understand how former sculptors have succeeded without them. I was happy to learn from several artists that Powers allows his brethren in the Art free use of these little improvements, and some of them acknowledged in grateful terms their obligations to his skill and his generosity.

announced that Thorvaldsden was at the door, and begged permission to come in. This was a trying moment. I could bear the gaze and the criticism of others with composure, but to pass the scrutiny of such a man, for whom I had a greater veneration than for any artist living ; it was no common ordeal !

Presently he came lumbering in, the Patriarch of sculptors ! His air was confident, but not haughty ; his chest large ; his head grand and square, but he had a look of great benevolence and intelligence. His long grey locks were floating loosely over his shoulders, and his walk was full of majesty and simplicity. He was the very man I should have taken for Thorvaldsden, had I met him on the desert. I had never seen any likeness of him, but I had pictured to my fancy just such a man.

He uncovered his head, and bowed in the most respectful manner, and only put on his hat after my repeated solicitations. He said he was sorry to disturb me, for he found me at work. I replied, of course, as an humble disciple in the art might ; but what I said on that occasion is a matter of little importance.

He cast an eye over the studio, and the first thing that seemed to arrest his attention was the bust of Mr. Webster. He examined it with great attention. " This," said he, " must be the bust of Mr. Webster. No modern resembles him in character. I never saw anything that approached the sublimity I see here, except in a few antique heads. But the

expression surpasses every bust I ever saw, Greek or Roman. I doubt if he ever had an equal."

After a long and careful examination of Webster's head, he stood back a few steps from it, and again, taking off his hat, he declared with surprise, "I never saw so grand a head before;"—a greater compliment to the orator, as was right, than to the artist, for there is nothing of mine about it. He then stood before General Jackson, which bust he regarded with as much attention and satisfaction, apparently, as Webster's. After examining most of the busts, I took him behind a screen to see the Eve. He examined it very attentively, and turned it round several times on the rollers, upon which all statues, when modelling, are placed, to be made to turn easily. Without saying, "by your leave, sir," he took out a large piece of clay from a portion of the hair, with his fingers: "Now I see the flesh under it, and can trace a connection of the parts of the shoulders." He touched the hair in another place: "This gives me a glimpse of this contour," pointing it out. Then coming down he made a mark on one of the knees: "This movement should be a little more pronounced." He then appeared to have done. I told him I should always feel grateful for his criticism, and begged he would speak freely; and I never, perhaps, felt more inwardly a desire, than I now felt, to have him go on. "I have pointed out all that seemed to me to detract from your statue.—I can see nothing else." When he was about leav-

ing, I told him I expected to come to Rome during the winter, and I should esteem it a great honor if he would allow me to take his bust. He condescended to say he would do so with unfeigned satisfaction. He then expressed very warmly the pleasure and the surprise he had felt during his visit, and wished me all the success I desired. He then very cordially pressed my hand and took his leave.*

* I have heard this visit related by a friend, who had a minute account of it from a gentleman who accompanied Thorvaldsden on this occasion. Mr. Powers has, in this conversation, withheld the most interesting part of the story. I am informed (from the source above alluded to) that Thorvaldsden felt reluctant to go to Powers' studio only because he was pressed for time; and he gave up an important visit to make this. He had a great desire to see the works of an artist who was already eclipsing most sculptors of his time. During the interview, which lasted much longer than he had intended, he expressed the warmest admiration of all Powers's works. But when he drove off in his carriage he exclaimed, with the greatest earnestness—" *I can't make such busts*—and never saw a man that could—nor do I believe he ever had an equal in that department of the art. I esteem Mr. Powers not only the first sculptor of his age, but the greatest since Michael Angelo. He will form a school of his own which will be a new era in art." These sentiments he often expressed afterwards on several occasions, particularly in Rome, where he frequently made use of this singular declaration, that "Mr. Powers was without a rival in modern times, except Michael Angelo; that no ancient or modern, of any age, had ever made such busts; and he *believed* he would be equally great in any branch of sculpture."

When the model of Eve was done, I put it into the hands of my workmen, who were now managing their chisels and files a good deal more to my satisfaction. I next began my GREEK SLAVE, which I finished in eight months. Although I had then no order for either, I was satisfied the time would come when the price I asked would no longer be an obstacle. I wished no more for my statues than I was obliged to ask to pay the expenses I was compelled to incur in making them ; and if I asked more than other sculptors, I believe it was generally conceded I laid out a corresponding amount of work upon my marble.

I put the Greek Slave into the hands of the workmen as soon as the model was perfected, and it was immediately begun from a portion of the block I had saved from the Eve. It was blocked out and partly done to the waist when Capt. John

* When Powers raised the curtain that covered the Eve, he felt that in justice to himself he ought to say that this was his first *attempt* at a statue, and it was not yet finished. Thorvaldsden replied: " You say, sir, it is your *first* statue—any man might be proud of it as his *last*."

Had any one else but Thorvaldsden said this, it would, at that time, have been difficult to believe the speaker sincere ; for Powers had then accomplished but little. But Thorvaldsden was a man who never trifled, and least of all on a subject of art. The fame Powers has since acquired is a striking illustration of the genius of Thorvaldsden ; and probably no man of our times has been gifted with a keener perception of genius in others.

Grant of London, formerly of the British Army, commissioned it. Lord Powerscourt had previously wished it, but we could not agree on the price.*

In the meantime I had modelled a little statue which I called the FISHER BOY. It is a difficult thing to find a subject of modern times whose history and peculiarities will justify entire nudity—but where the subject and its history make this necessary, it may be looked upon with less reserve than it could be if the exposure were intentional on the part of the artist. In the case of my Eve clothing would be preposterous, for she was conscious she was naked only *after* she had fallen. History and nature both require entire nudity. The Slave is compelled to stand naked to be judged of in the slave-market ;—this is an historical fact. Few such subjects, however, can be found.

Having always an intention, if I could not sell these statues, to exhibit them in the United States, such subjects properly treated were certainly more pure than statues and pictures which are *artfully draped with a view to expose* ; such, for example, as Canova's Venus. For illustration, I've seen women in a ball-room who would be shocked at a sight of the Venus de' Medici, or any nude statue, however delicate and chaste, who, from the pretext of fashion,

* When this nobleman returned to Florence, he remarked to a friend that he had made a great mistake in not taking it at any price ; but it was too late. It was ordered.

or more probably a secret wish to allure, have so dressed themselves, that the effect upon the beholder was a thousand fold more contaminating to good morals than all the naked statues in the world.

And here I will make a remark that will be confirmed by all artists who have worked after naked models. Whatever temptation they have experienced while so engaged, has been while the model was partially draped, either dressing or undressing. And I have heard many say, and I can testify from my own experience, that he who can resist the allurements of a modern *belle*, dressed *à-la-mode*, is steel-proof against all the temptations of naked models, statues, and pictures. It is easy to account for this: The imagination clothes an object of which it has only a partial view, but with which it is pleased, with a halo of romance, which vanishes into thin air when all is seen. Hence we see so many instances of love-sick swains being speedily cured after the knot has been tied and the curtain raised by the parson!

It was not my object for interest's sake to set before my countrymen demoralizing subjects, and thus get even my bread at the expense of public chastity. On the contrary, I believed that so far from a pure abstract human form tempered with chaste expression and attitude, militating against public or private virtue, it was, on the contrary, calculated to awaken the highest emotions of the soul for the pure and the beautiful, and direct the mind

of the beholder to the contemplation of the circumstances supposed, and thereby excite his sympathies for the ideal being whose image stands before him. I know not what the effect of a perfect female form would be upon an utterly depraved man, and it's of little consequence, for it could not make him worse. For my own part I do not claim to be exempt from the infirmities of human nature, but I must say that beauty and innocence can bear to be seen from head to foot as God made it, without danger to those who have a redeeming quality still left in their souls. And if, as all will admit, the society of chaste and well educated women has a tendency to exalt the mind, and make the stronger sex better and purer, is it not strange that this should be limited to the face alone, and that the handy-work of our Maker, as displayed throughout the entire form, must be always *necessarily* concealed, lest his most perfect and wonderful work should defeat the purpose for which it was made!

I have endeavored in these two statues to avoid anything that could either by form or import offend the purest mind; and to accomplish my design better, I have left out any expression in either of them of a consciousness of their nudity. In the Eve this is inferred of course—"For they were naked and were not ashamed"—indeed, they knew not that they were naked. But in the Slave, as it is a subject of our own times, we could not suppose this under ordinary circumstances—but there *are* circum-

stances under which it might be supposed, and I selected a subject that would justify this.

The Slave has been taken from one of the Greek Islands by the Turks, in the time of the Greek Revolution; the history of which is familiar to all. Her father and mother, and perhaps all her kindred, have been destroyed by her foes, and she alone preserved as a treasure too valuable to be thrown away. She is now among barbarian strangers, under the pressure of a full recollection of the calamitous events which have brought her to her present state; and she stands exposed to the gaze of the people she abhors, and awaits her fate with intense anxiety, tempered indeed by the support of her reliance upon the goodness of God. Gather all these afflictions together, and add to them the fortitude and resignation of a Christian, and no room will be left for shame. Such are the circumstances under which the Greek slave is supposed to stand.

Every one remembers listening to the sound of the sea-shell, in which we hear what the poets call "the murmur of the sea." But it is not so generally known that the shell is supposed to give warning of the approach of a storm. I had an impression this superstition was confined to America; but many of my visitors have told me it is general throughout the world. Everybody knows the cause of the sound we hear in the shell, which is a species of ear trumpet, that magnifies feeble sounds to such a degree, that they become much more audible, and are

echoed from the large end of the trumpet, provided the small end be shut, so strongly, and in so peculiar a manner as to resemble, by the aid of the fancy, the roar of the waves of the sea. There have been several beautiful pieces written on this; particularly by Dryden and Wordsworth; but none have alluded to the shell as an oracle of the weather. To represent this peculiar superstition (if indeed it be all superstition), I have made a small statue of a boy of a light and delicate form, and an innocent expression, holding a shell to his ear with his left hand, while with the right he supports a net and the tiller of his boat. He is standing upon the sand, and near his feet are some small shells and sea-weed, to denote the margin of the ocean.

This figure is a kind of Appollino, but the character is modern; for I hold that artists should do honor to their own times and their own religion, instead of going back to mythology to illustrate, for the thousandth time, the incongruous absurdities and inconsistencies of idolatrous times, especially as our times and our religion are full of subjects equal in beauty, and all the qualities necessary to a full development of art. Why cling to a Jupiter, when our Saviour affords us a greater than parallel subject? Why a Hercules, while we have a Samson? Why an Apollo, while we have a David? or any of them, while we have a Moses who is peculiar, and, with the exception of a Jupiter, more noble than them all? Then with the other sex mythology af-

fords no Eve, no Miriam, no Virgin Mary, no Magdalen, no Rebecca, no Jephtha's daughter, no Angels, no Michael, no Gabriel, no Ithuriel; and I might mention a hundred other characters equally adapted to sculptural and pictorial representations.

I do not cite these as parallel subjects exactly, but as themes which may afford as fine opportunities for the display of human genius in art, as the ancients had in old time; and I believe in very many respects they are calculated to draw forth a finer moral feeling, and, consequently, a loftier sentiment and a more exalted genius. This is a consideration not too commonly advanced, or entertained; but it should not be forgotten, that art rises in its perfection just in proportion to the purity and moral majesty of the subject of which the artist treats. Many a great artist has attempted a lewd theme, but he never made a great work; and there are no remains of ancient or modern art, I am bold to say, that bear with them any clear indication of lofty genius, which shock, in any considerable degree, the loftier and purer feelings. God, in his cunning wisdom, has wrought deep into the constitution of all things the great law, that sublimity and excellence of every kind are in a more or less intimate relation with purity. If you find anything beautiful, very beautiful, you are just as sure to find something pure. This is illustrated strikingly in those remains of ancient art, which have so long attracted the gaze, and excited the admiration of mankind.

In the Laocoon, which sends the cold shudder through one, years after he saw it first ; in the stately and superb group of Niobe and her children, which awakens every generous and lofty emotion of the human soul ; in the head of Brutus, which carries you back to the streets of Rome before her Cæsars ; and in

“That bending statue which delights the world,”

where the chisel of Cleomenes has transmitted to all coming times the perfection of ideal beauty ; in all these great gems of antiquity, where Greece and Rome have exhausted their genius, and been contending for the palm of sculpture for two thousand years—there is loftiness, there is sublimity, there is the perfection of beauty. And why is it so ? Why have they lived and been transmitted from age to age ? And why shall they be transmitted to future ages for ever ? *They are pure !*

I believe that we may, under the guidance of this principle, surpass the ancients in art, as far as the Religion of the fishermen of Galilee surpasses the filthy dreams of their mythology. I well know we may fail to do it, too ; and I am persuaded we shall fail, until we abandon their subjects, and a wretched, servile imitation of their works.

But a step further. I have seen either the originals or good casts of nearly all the celebrated representations of our Saviour ; and, with a few exceptions, they portray the humility, meekness and benevo-

lence that are supposed to have been peculiar to him ; but in none of these, if I except the Ivory Christ of yours, cut by an uneducated monk at Genoa, have I ever seen that expression of mind, of divine grandeur which must have been just as peculiar to his wonderful character. It would be enough for us to know that he were the Prince of Peace, to know the one, and it is enough for us to know that he is the Son of God, to convince us of the second. When we read the New Testament we are guided to a conclusion in which we cannot be mistaken ; and I have always felt that Milton was the only Christian of modern writers who has drawn the person and the character of the Son of God with just conceptions of his intellect, his majesty and his grandeur, as we find it drawn by the simple but inspired pens of the Apostles.

Perhaps the statue of Christ by Thorvaldsden embodies more of this conception than anything ever executed in marble. That great man seldom made a failure ; and he has gone over almost the whole empire of sculpture. There is a very touching incident connected with his Christ. He first made the disciples and sold them to his Government at Copenhagen. He then executed for them his Christ, and presented it to them “without money and without price” to complete the group.

Some have said, and others no doubt will affirm, that a grand masculine character is inconsistent with the mildness and benevolence of the Saviour ; but I

do not think so. As a proof that all these characteristics may be united in one individual, I need only mention the bust of Washington by Houdon; where we see not only the highest degree of goodness and benevolence, but all the elements of the most grand and lofty character. I have heard foreigners declare, while gazing on this bust, that he was not only the best of men, but the wisest and most majestic of all human beings. His bust expresses the fullness of his character. There is no head among all the ancients so grand and noble; and while looking at it, I have often communed with myself in the following manner: If I wanted counsel, he is the man I would go to; if I wanted one to defend me, here is one with the courage and the prudence to do it; a confidant, who so trustworthy? a friend, who so constant? But there are certain qualities not to be found there. He was a practical man, and not a poet. I should never expect rhetorical eloquence from such a man, nor low wit, nor anything in the way of small talk.

I do not cite the bust of Washington for a parallel in a similar work of our Saviour, but as a simple illustration of the remark that the milder and the sterner qualities of humanity may be all expressed in the same person.

Much has been said about supernatural works of art, and much written to prove that art has attained an elevation beyond the power of nature to express.

As instances of this, we are pointed to the Jupiter, the Venus, and the Apollo, &c. I have examined these works attentively, with a desire to discover those supernatural qualities which I have never been able to find in a work of art; nor do I conceive it possible to reach any such elevation while we are compelled to go to nature for our instruction. But I will illustrate what I mean. We are held to the earth by the power of gravitation, and we ascend only by means of steps; where these steps cease, we who have no wings stop, nor could we rise a single step were it not for the power nature has given us of so doing. Nor could we, if deprived of the senses of sight and hearing, and all opportunity of feeling the form of the human face, be able to produce anything analogous to it. And even with all our faculties in the greatest perfection, we find it difficult enough to approach the perfection of form we discover in the most familiar objects. How then are we to proceed beyond the highest round of the ladder, when we depend wholly upon it for support? To make a supernatural copy we must be favored with supernatural forms! But the truth is, none of these supernatural works have ever rivalled the excellence of nature's own moulding. One word about the celebrated head of Jupiter. I acknowledge it is super-human, or rather *sutto-humano* (as the Italians say), in one respect; for the forehead is that of a lion and the features, generally, have a strong resemblance to those of that beast;—I am inclined

to think the artist who made it, to some extent took a lion for his model.

Standing before the head of Jupiter, and applying the test we have applied to Washington's, there are several important qualities which do not respond in a satisfactory manner. Powerful he may be, but not supremely wise. He is hasty, and would act on a rash impulse. He is sensual and therefore could not be trusted. He is tyrannical, and could not govern well; a woman would over-persuade him. It may be answered that these qualities were attributed to him by the ancients, and that he is truly their Jupiter. But it must be remembered they make him *less* than human in the full sense of the term, and therefore far less than a god,—and so I find him; and I aver that without going to the lion for a model, but conforming ourselves entirely to nature, a greater and more god-like head could be produced; and it is no argument against this assertion to say it has never been done. This is the flattering unction I well know stupidity and mediocrity have always presented to the heart, and even genius itself has owned the fatal charm.

It has been in all modern times the height of ambition among all artists, except the few who have really given impulse to art, to imitate the great, and I might also say the little Masters of Antiquity. The effect has been just what any one with a modicum of common sense might have foreseen. The very best of the originals they bowed before, fell far

short of the matchless perfection of nature, and they fell perhaps still further below portions of the model they copied. But any man who will walk through the galleries and gardens of Italy, will find “confirmation strong as proofs of Holy Writ,” that there were as many lame attempts under the ancient as under the modern *régime* ; and as many pretenders worked in marble then as now, and I’m rather inclined to think still more. But that would be a more difficult question perhaps to settle than might be supposed. As the English say of the Corn Laws, a good deal could be said on both sides. This rage of imitating art rather than nature, and imitating fools as well as masters, had reduced art pretty low till our own times—for who has really done much in sculpture after Michael Angelo, except Thorvaldsen ?

What I said of the head of Jupiter might apply with respective modifications to all so-called supernatural and super-human productions. One of the best proofs that the surest road to the highest excellence in art is intimate communion with nature, will be found in the fact which no one qualified to give any opinion on the subject will question, that those works most approved by the world, without a single exception, are the most purely natural. But there are many who do not understand rightly what nature is ; and for such it may not be amiss to say that everything that is not beautiful is *more or less deformed*—for to be called deformed in the common

acceptation of the term, it must depart in an extraordinary degree from the proportions of nature.

To illustrate. A man may be bow-legged in a slight degree, and not be considered deformed ; increase it, and his deformity becomes palpable. So of the face ; a slight deviation from the Greek model of the human face may not be inconsistent with much beauty, but a wide deviation is decidedly ugly. By this I must not be understood, that an aquiline nose, or its reverse, would be a wide deviation, or any similar peculiarity of the individual features. What I said relates solely to the grand measurement or proportions of the human face and form. Lest I should be misunderstood, I will illustrate this.

From the top of the head to the top of the forehead is one of the four equal divisions the Greeks made in the head—to the under part of the brow, another—to the juncture of the nose with the upper lip, a third, and to the bottom of the chin, the fourth. These, then, should be equal, and they generally are in nature, if I except the under measurement.

These measurements are sufficient to illustrate what I wish to show—which is that, if (for example) the distance from the nose to the chin should happen to be an inch greater than from the end of the nose to the under part of the eyebrows, it would be an extravagant deviation from the Greek model. The Greeks varied slightly from these proportions, according to the character they wished to represent.

If it was a delicate cast of features, like a Venus or a Diana, the distance from the eyebrows to the nose was increased, and from the nose to the chin diminished.

The blight which has fallen on the human race has defaced the human form more than the surface of nature, or the forms of the brute creation. The incessant violations of the design of God in man's creation, have brought into action a great variety of disturbing causes ; and in almost every human form, however perfect we may esteem it, there is some palpable defect, which would appear to any one by comparing it with a perfect model. The beasts, the fish, and the birds, have, in a great degree, escaped this deforming blight. Milton has given a striking picture of this withering blast that has fallen on creation.

All this proves that what is not beautiful is not natural ; it may have life and soul, but adulterated by infirmity and defects. Anything that deviates widely from the model that mankind by long observation have wrought into the ideal of beauty, shocks the beholder as a palpable deformity or defect. A broken limb can never be perfectly natural again ; it may be healed, to be sure, and return nearly to its original form, but the work of nature has been disturbed, and it can never again be harmoniously adjusted. This is a case open to the perception and understanding of all.

We are led by such an illustration to the general

conclusion that a thousand other causes which are in silent and it may be insensible association, are steadily producing similar consequences in kind, though less palpable in degree. By slow and imperceptible working, such causes *deform* the limb; by a violent operation they *break* it. But organic law is just as really violated in the one instance as in the other. Nature is always struggling to gain her supremacy and to beautify all her works; and, in defiance of the inconceivable opposition she meets with from the human race, still contrives to show herself—but like a beautiful landscape dimmed by the cold mist. She looks out from the eyes of one—she plays around the lips of another—she arches the brows of a third—she waves in the luxuriant hair of a fourth—she heaves on the bosom of a fifth—and she slides down the graceful slopes of the shoulders of a sixth—and she would enthrone herself in every breathing form were not her mysterious sceptre broken by the waywardness of man, and the blight that has breathed mildew over creation.

For these reasons, in producing an ideal work, so called, a female statue, for example, it is necessary to resort to a great number of models in order to arrive at that *golden mean* (as the poet says, or that *correct form*, to use the language of the studio), which all beautiful women hint at, but none fully express. To make these inferences justly, and arrange and combine them in one whole which shall after all be individual in its character, constitutes the great diffi-

culty of the artist ; and this is the only way to arrive at what is generally termed an ideal work, which, when properly defined, ought to mean a perfectly natural work.

“God made man in his own image ;” the only explanation or correct interpretation of which is, that He made him physically as well as morally in a divine form ; and therefore if we would reproduce that form, our work would be divine, but not *super-natural* ; for after all, Adam and Eve were physically nothing more than purely natural human beings, and the only two, most probably, that have ever existed ;—even they ceased to be so when they ceased to obey the laws under which they were created.

But perfection is not absolutely lost ; it is only dispersed through the human race, and it is the business of the artist to collect its beauties as the bee gathers his honey from flower to flower ; and, like the bee who seeks his honey among the wild flowers, he will find little of it in the haunts of artificial life. Under French corsets, English bustles, and Parisian shoes it is seldom found. It loves the pure air of heaven, and will be left free as the mountain flower, whose delicate petals come forth in their time, when nature calls them, without the forcing agency of a hot-house. The best models, therefore, are found in those walks of life where nature predominates over art ; and I have found the best models among what are termed the working classes. I do not

mean seamstresses, and those whose bodies remain in an inactive state while the arms are overtasked; but those whose occupations give a healthy exercise to the whole frame. For it must not be forgotten that our bodies and limbs are made to use; and, like a delicate machine, unless it be cared for, and applied to the purpose for which it was made, will corrode and fall into disorder: in the one case it is shown by rust, warping and decay; in the other, by irregular and unsymmetrical development, flabbiness, cadaverous complexion, &c., &c.

In Italy and some other countries of Europe, it is the custom to swathe children as soon as born, in such a manner they cannot move their lower limbs for many months; and deformity in the lower parts of the body is, therefore, more common in these countries. It is natural for children to move every limb with almost every movement; which shows it was the design of nature to give development to all the organs of the body while they are growing so fast. It is also necessary in natural life to maintain, by corresponding exercise and habits, this pure and healthy development.

While I was at the marble quarries of Seravezza (eighteen miles east of Carrara—the great cave which has supplied the world with marble) I saw one of the finest female forms, under peculiar circumstances. She was bare-footed, coming down the side of the mountain with sixty pounds of marble on her head. Her dress, if such I may call it, was rude, and I

could see her limbs in their development. She was one of those women who employ themselves in carrying down paving stones; made six journeys a day, and received for that dreadful toil less than eight cents a day. Her limbs were of extraordinary beauty in their form, but not in their color, which had suffered too much from exposure. Her feet were truly beautiful; for she had never worn a pair of shoes. A great part of her life had been devoted to this terrible work of ranging the briar-covered mountains, through rough passes, in all weathers, and yet her feet still maintained their symmetry, although a *Parisian* might have found fault with their breadth, as they do with the feet of the finest Greek statues.

I've had occasion to see a great many female models, and I can tell at a glance any one who has been accustomed to wear stays, or corsets, for their waists are sure to be deformed. The ribs are forced down, and frequently overlapped, and they have often a wasp-like appearance. Such persons are unable to exercise freely, for the position of the most vital parts has been affected by this practice, and there is no longer room for a free action of the lungs. Some of the finest formed models I have ever seen, would, when dressed, pass for clumsy persons, were it not for a certain freedom and ease in their carriage. But let one of them be seen in a loose drapery, falling lightly over her form, and although she might be pointed out as a huge-waisted,

clumsy creature, by the corseted *belle* and the corset-maker, she would arrest the gaze of every lover of nature in her primitive beauty, and be the first one sought for by the sculptor, whose lofty aim is to represent the simplicity and grace of nature's pure moulding. What should we say of an invention to apply stays to an Arabian horse, or a wild fawn, or a lion of the desert? Would not the idea be ridiculous, of trying to improve upon the grace or the beauty of nature's own work? And is it not impious to trifle in that manner with the noblest work of God? It is not only the lowest species of imposture, but absolutely sacrilegious!

There are no two forms alike, even in their minutest parts, so endless are the shifting developments of nature. Where we find a depression in one, we sometimes meet with an elevation in another, owing to the unequal distribution of muscles, flesh, and liquids; and we even find unequal proportions and developments of limbs quite as striking. I've seen well-formed legs associated with lean, bony arms; beautiful hands, with very ugly feet; finely formed toes, with very bad limbs; beautiful front, with an ugly back; and so with the different features of the face. All this shows the importance of wide observation in nature, to group symmetrical parts into the ideal form.

I've seen many statues executed from a single model, and such works may have a great deal of beauty, but they are always associated with defects,

which, with a wider survey, would have been left out in favor of better developments in those particular parts. I know of a model who is very perfect in what are called the measurements of the human form ; but she is too lean, her outlines are too severe. Still, she has been more useful to me than any other, for I have found it comparatively easy, with a perfect articulation, to complete the fullness of the ideal form, from the rounded and sloped graces of other models.

The lower limbs of a woman are larger in proportion to her size than those of a man, while the muscles are much smaller and more delicately pronounced. This is owing to the predominance of the cellular substance which covers the muscles, and is what gives to the female limbs that peculiar roundness ; the muscles are thus rendered less visible, and the outlines softer of necessity.

There are in Florence from fifty to a hundred young women who stand as models, and there are many besides who are not known as such ; but ultimately most of them become models by profession. It is not considered a particularly respectable calling, of course, but I have known several whom I believed virtuous, some of whom are now married, and, for aught I have heard, make good wives. Those who have any regard for their reputation seldom go to a studio alone ; but are attended by a mother or sister, or female friend, and during the time they are required, their attendants are occupied

in sewing, knitting, or plating straw. They are generally paid by the hour, and according to their excellence. Some receive twenty cents an hour, others will not stand as models for less than half a dollar, no matter what the time may be: but many are satisfied with a paul (ten cents). In Rome they are better paid, for they are in greater demand, from the great number of artists.

They do not scruple to throw off all their clothes, for they regard an artist as they do a looking-glass; but few of them will permit a stranger who is not an artist to be present, and I have known some of them to express as much alarm at the approach of persons to the door, as would be expected from a lady surprised in her dressing-room. During the sittings they converse freely on anything that happens to excite attention; other artists they have stood for, and the opinions they brought away of them and their works; and some of them seem to take as warm an interest in the progress of a statue as the artist himself. In the summer, the climate is so warm they do not suffer the least inconvenience from the exposure; but if their position be a painful one, stooping or holding up an arm, they require frequent rest. During these intervals they throw a portion of their dress about them, and sit, and sometimes work a few moments till the artist is ready to go on again. But in winter a fire is necessary, and even then, they sometimes take cold, but not often. When at home, and not called for as models, they

usually pursue some domestic calling to aid in their support.

The middle classes in Florence have little to do with stays; it's only the extreme fashionables who wear them habitually. They dress very simply, but in beautiful taste; a common gown without ornament, lightly gathered at the waist; never low in the bosom, which they universally regard, as it really is, both vulgar and dangerous for the health; their head dress never varies—the broad straw flat. The ladies of Florence are not often beautiful; but many of the peasant girls, or *contadine*, who crowd the city on festival days, are very beautiful. Few of them can read or write, but their walk, and manners, and voices, are such, as would throw enchantment around a lady of rank—their carriage particularly is exceedingly graceful and dignified, and as they move along under their broad Leghorn flats, you might fancy them princesses in disguise—some of them are exquisitely beautiful in face, form, and complexion. While looking at some of these *contadine*, I have wondered at the taste of those painters who prefer to copy in the Galleries the Titians and the Raphaels, beautiful as they may be, when a little trouble would obtain for them original models, surpassing in beauty anything I have ever seen fully carried out in art. Here they could find new Magdalens, new Madonnas, new Fornarinas, St. Catharines, St. Agnes; and the fault would be their own if

they did not equal, and even surpass, those wonderful compositions so celebrated all over the world.

Copying old pictures and statues, in preference to going to nature, is like entering a French flower-shop to paint a garland, instead of going to the garden to copy from nature herself. The flower-shop would be useful in the study of arrangement, but no farther—so it is with pictures and statues. We go to the antique for good taste in arrangement, for symbols and true proportion; but there we should stop, preferring to build up our work from the quarries and forests of nature, instead of tearing down old buildings of wood and stone, and forcing their parts into new combinations, which, bearing no relation to the subject in hand, must necessarily be out of place, and diminish the effect to be produced. I've seen statues built up in this way, and I've said to myself, I think I've seen that before—and I don't think he has bettered it. A great deal has been said of Canova's Perseus, but it's built out of the ruins of the Apollo. There are fragments of him in the head—detached parts in the arms—traces of him in the torso, and exaggerations of him in the legs—in short, it's a species of caricature on the Apollo. Lest you might esteem me severe, I refer you to Winckelmann's great work, where the Editor has gone so far as to put engravings of them side by side, probably to show the theft.* Such men would do

* The same remark has been made of Persico's statues of Peace and War in the east portico of the Capitol. They are

well to remember the reply of Michael Angelo to one of this stamp, who asked his opinion about his statue—"I don't know what will become of your statue at the day of judgment," said he, "when all the members rejoin their bodies."

Such works can never fail to be cold and expressionless; for being made up of other compositions, they have no individual character. The reputation of Canova has long been on the wane, and we hear many critics declare in our times, that he exaggerated the antique without rivalling the ancients, in their representations of nature. His style is Academic, and few of his works escape the charge.

nothing more nor less than copies (and bad ones at that) of statues of Mars and Minerva at Rome. The marble is beautiful, and they are well finished, but to avoid the charge of *stealing outright*, the artist has made some deviations which deteriorated from their excellence just in proportion as he carried them out. He would have done better to have copied them at once, and had the frankness and honesty to own it, for such tricks are sure to be detected. An Italian sculptor who had seen the copies and the originals, remarked to me that he considered it the *coolest* attempt at imposition he had ever known in his life, and if he had done it in Europe, he would have been read out of decent society. He might have saved the government, too, some \$20,000 (more or less), by giving them notice beforehand of his chivalric intention, and good stonecutters in Rome could have been found who would have made much better copies of the Mars and Minerva for about one-twentieth part of the money. But it's quite evident our government are either ignorant of, or insensible to, this bold fraud.

Apropos to academies and their influence upon the genius of young artists ; and I venture to assert, though it may seem to some a bold declaration, that they do more harm than good. This would not be the case if we could banish the Professors, and allow the scholars, after acquiring the first rudiments of the art, to pursue their own tastes, form their own styles, and learn for themselves. But the Professor strives to form them all after his own model—they must all pull the same way—in short, become chips of the old block. With him, any aspiration after originality is contrary to the rules, and the culprit is whipped like a refractory horse, back to his treadmill, where he must move on in unison with the rest, and conform to the machinery of the establishment.*

* Florence affords an example of this. Benvenuti and Bezzuoli both painted red and brick-dust and chrome flame, from their pictures. It's enough to put one's eyes out to pass through an annual exhibition in Florence and gaze upon the *clean* pictures ranged along the walls. I say *clean*, for no matter what the subject may be, a battle or a drawing-room, no dirt is to be seen. If a battle piece, where all ought to be rough and tumble, and blood, and smoke, and dust, you can count the nails in the shoes of the horses, and they are polished at that. The smoke is clean smoke ; and the dust is mist, which would not soil the damp mirror of a lady's boudoir. There are some Florentines, however, who have dared to think and paint for themselves ; but so perverted is the taste acquired from the conventional works of the academy, that they are passed by almost unnoticed, while crowds gather around the pictures of the above-named masters. I would

The great masters of art were not produced in schools; or if originating there, they very soon abandoned them, and became heads themselves. They may be compared to comets; and their followers constitute their tails. How many have imitated Michael Angelo, and who has ever equalled him? Still it is easy to see they all belonged to his tail, for they have a portion of his atmosphere about them. Raphael was the pupil of Perugino, but he soon outstripped his master and left him, to establish his own style.

In all this, I do not wish to be understood as underrating the great merit of what we call the antique; for I regard it as an invaluable guide to be consulted to lead us back to the pure fountains of nature, where those great masters drank. But even they are valuable, only as they have represented to us what we find scattered around us, by the pro-

not say these pictures are all destitute of merit, for they contain much good drawing; and were they better colored and less exaggerated, they would do great credit to their authors. Lest I might be thought unjust, let me extract a passage from Haydon—"The present modern schools of Europe, from want of eye, especially neglect, as if by consent, this sound decree; and, without exception, the colors of all the modern schools are enough to scare the student to disgust. Faint raw insipid blues; nauseous filthy yellows; dirty brick-dust flesh, with thick shadows, hatched feebly, with a timid hand, in spite of correct drawing and skilful composition, are the characteristics at present of the Italians."

fuse hand of the Creator. They should be studied, not copied. They are mile-stones and guide-boards, which were never intended by their authors to interrupt the traveller in his journey, but to give him safe directions and enliven the fatigues of his way.

I would, therefore, have all the works of the great masters of antiquity studied, and studied intensely. To contribute to this noble purpose I would have Schools of Design everywhere opened, with collections of works of art for the instruction of pupils—the more the better—and gather accurate copies, and casts, of all the noble works left us by the genius of former ages. But let these works answer the high purpose for which their authors made them; let them kindle in the souls of the multitude, every lofty and generous sentiment they are calculated to awaken, and let them electrify the heart of the few chosen spirits God brings into the world, from time to time, to illumine their age and instruct their countrymen. Let these schools and collections be multiplied in all our cities and large towns, and their benign effect will be seen in all coming time,*

* Haydon in his book, which had not appeared when Powers spoke, recommends, warmly, the same project.

“With Professors at the Universities to instil high views in the statesman, and Schools of Design in the great towns, headed by a great central school in London, backed by moderate and judicious state encouragement, I appeal to you all, if ten years would not make such a difference in the state of English art and manufactures, as to make us regard the seventy thousand pictures which have been

not only in every production of fine arts, but in every branch of mechanism let the scholar use his

produced the last seventy years, with a few exceptions, in fright and terror." . . . "But remember, nothing will, nothing can be effectually of use, till Schools of Design be established in the great towns, of which the knowledge, the deepest knowledge of the human figure must be the *corner-stone*."

"In the evidence before the Committee of Arts there are symptoms of breaking day. The necessity of design, as a part of education, is *acknowledged by all*, Professors, and workmen. The utter failure of academies all over Europe, to produce genius, was proved. The great men, Massaccio, Michael Angelo, Raffaele, Lionardo, Titian, Correggio, Tintoretto, Rubens, Velasquez, Reynolds, Hogarth, and Wilson came from the workshops of individual artists. 'The workmen were then more than artists, and the artists more than workmen,' most admirably said Prof. Waagen of Berlin.

"'To what circumstances,' said Mr. Evart, the chairman, to Mr. Morrison (the head of a great Manchester house in the city), 'do you attribute the superiority of foreign manufacturers in art to our own?' 'To the fact,' said Mr. Morrison, 'that on the Continent they have *public schools for teaching the art of Design*.'

"To another gentleman (the buyer of a house at the West-end), it was asked, 'to what circumstance do you attribute the superiority of France in the manufacture of French gloves?' 'To the knowledge the manufacturer has of the *shape* of the hand,' was the reply. 'Of course, any French manufacturer can draw the hand, before he presumes to make a glove for it; the reverse is the case here. The hand is convex outwardly, and concave inwardly; no man is aware of this who does not study the shape.' 'I am

own eyes instead of his master's, and venture to follow his own impulses ; and, above all, let him beware how he works with those fellows in harness, all crammed together, moving on eternally without advancing.*

of opinion,' said another witness, ' that design is so extensively useful, I would make it, after reading and writing, a necessary concomitant part of education. I think it quite as easy to teach design, as writing.' "

* Haydon, in his admirable Lectures on Painting and Design just received in this country, is even still more severe on the academies. After indulging to some extent in a vein of inimitable satire, he says :

" I know well thus ridiculing the grand style" (as the academies call it) " as it has been taught by all the academies of Europe for the last three hundred years, will subject me to imputations of presumption ; but with my foot on the Neptune's breast of the Elgin marbles, with its roll of skin under the arm-pit, and its veins on the ribs, I defy all the academies on the face of the earth ! Because common sense is the basis of my ridicule ; and the real grand style can never revive in Europe, or exist as it existed in Greece, but in reversing all the absurdities which have been the principles of instruction in Europe for three hundred years.

" It can never revive but by making Nature the basis of all grandeur, and not exaggeration the excuse for violating her unalterable simplicity.

" It can never revive but by considering all parts in the imitation of her beauty essential ! And essential detail, in form, color, and light and shadow, in effect, contribute to High Art, as much as drawing and expression. . . .

" Finally consult nature for everything, let your flights

I can conceive of nothing so directly calculated to degrade genius to the level of mediocrity as the system of academies that has been the rage in Europe for two centuries. Why, it is all summed up in a single word: they have never yet produced a man who has carried art to any higher stage of perfection than he found it. They are filled with tools and they are crowded with machinery; but tools and machinery are not genius—they are not nature, and they never will be.

I have sometimes seen the baneful effects of these academies upon young men of genius. Off in some distant and obscure nook of creation, was born one who bore upon his very form the impression of the great hand of nature; which may always be detected when she steps out of her ordinary course, for she leaves the deep traces of her footsteps. In his eye flashed the fire that burned in the soul. He had never seen art or artists, nor heard of an academy; but in the wild, free, beautiful country, he drank in the pure air, and breathed the inspiration such souls everywhere find in the works of God. Urged on by impulses he could not subdue, and guided by the infallible hand of the Great Teacher, he began to draw upon a stone, a board, a rude piece of canvas, ideal forms that were floating through his fancy; and every stroke of his pencil was a volume which be ever so poetical; remember your engine is man. Never wish, never try to be independent of Nature; it is the first step to incurable mannerism.

could be read, rude though it were. Now what did he need? Opportunity to see and to study, and not a master to dictate to him. No academies, but works to contemplate, unshackled by prejudice, or conventional form and instruction. He was born to be an artist, and he would not do anything else. At last some friend, or wise man, discerned his "propensity to study," as it was called, and suggested the idea he would make an artist; and who knew but he would one day become a great master, if he could only be sent to an academy? And he was sent; taken out of the school of nature, and put into the school of art. It was certain to effect his ruin, and it did. "How?" I will tell you.

When he went through the academy, he saw a thousand beautiful things, and he would have done well enough if he could have been left alone to follow his impulses, and study the great works he found there; and let his genius unfold itself as his own limbs and muscles had done, by free, healthful and voluntary movements.—But no! He is put into the harness. Caught gazing at a bust of Brutus, a Laocoon, or something else, and tracing out some lines on paper which would have been, if they had let him alone a day or two, not unlikely a piece in which might have been traced the very soul of the artist who made the original. But he is trespassing on forbidden ground. He is even laughed at for attempting what he is taught to believe he will not be able to do for long years. And these long years,

how must he spend them ? Under the drillings of a professor, who, ten to one, knows no better how to train him in art than a militia captain.

He has now been diverted suddenly from the path his own impulses marked out for him, and which was certain for that very reason to be the only path he ever ought to travel, or ever could travel with success, and dragged into the harness to work by the side of others, who, after working a whole lifetime, never could understand the deep meaning of any one of the ten thousand voices of nature, or leave off where he would begin. He has now fallen under the academy, and he is trained up by the academy, and at last all impulse, all enthusiasm, is suppressed or diverted into an artificial channel. He believes what his teachers tell him, for everybody he hears speak, and all he sees confirms the truth of what they said, and he finally believes it himself; and the work of ruin is done. In after life he may become even an illustrious academician, and be the first of all his competitors in the school; and occasionally you may detect a glimpse of nature and natural feeling in his works: but examine critically—go up close—whatever may be the style, the subject, or the occasion, it's all cold, or exaggerated, or false, and it's always sure to be conventional. That man has been so long under the all powerful, all pervading influence of the academy; he has so long breathed its own peculiar air, that he has drank in its spirit. Nature has been exterminated from his

soul, with all her lofty and generous feelings, and a cold system of conventional rules substituted as a guide, in the place of those infallible impulses, which would just as surely one day, if uninterrupted in their working, have led him on to a new field, unexplored by human genius ; where he would have won glorious trophies for his art, and made the ideal groups crowding his brain live, and move, and breathe, in marble or on the canvas ; as the pure mountain rivulet is sure, if left to its own wild dashings, one day to find its way to the distant but glorious ocean.

One great reason why our country advances no more rapidly in the arts, and which I fear will for a long time prove too formidable to be overcome by the few who are laboring against the tide, is, that our people can see no beauty in anything unless they can survey it with a telescope at a distance ; and everything near by, everything domestic, everything consecrated by the air and the spirit of America, is either positively despised or too little esteemed. The way to sell an American painting, is to bring it abroad, and take it back as an Italian work ; and this has sometimes been done. Pictures painted by Alston, which would not have brought fifty dollars a-piece, sold in Great Britain for several hundred guineas. We have quite a number of artists whose works are eagerly sought for by some of the best judges of art.*

* An incident came to my knowledge in Italy which illustrates this spirit very well. An American painter of

The surest way for American artists to succeed in getting commissions from their own countrymen, fine talents, painted a picture intended only as a *study*; but in it he had so successfully imitated the style of one of the best schools of the 16th century, that many European artists were themselves deceived. The picture was regarded as a very beautiful gem of some old master; and had the artist been inclined to resort to one of the tricks so often practised, he might have declared it to be by some illustrious painter, put into his hands by a nobleman who was compelled to sell it—although he was not at liberty to give the proprietor's name—and in this manner a large sum might have been obtained.

To enjoy a joke at the expense of several painters of rather large pretensions for their calibre, such a representation *was* made, and two or three gentlemen, whose testimony might some time be useful, admitted behind the scenes. Among other competitors for the prize, was an American gentleman of large fortune. Hearing several painters of great reputation express a warm admiration for the work, he came forward and offered a large sum for it. The owner and painter of the picture, however, frankly told the American gentleman that he could not *warrant* anything about it, and if he purchased it, he must do it on his own responsibility.

"Never mind," said the American, "it is evidently a picture of real merit, and I don't care if Jim Crow painted it; I will give that sum."—(\$500.)

He came for his picture, money in hand. It was not only a most astonishing imitation of the old style in coloring, &c., but it had been regularly subjected to smoke, acids, &c., till even the painter said if he had not done it himself, he would have sworn it had, to say the least, seen three hundred years

is to go abroad, and be favorably known in a foreign country; when they get to Italy they are cer-

But the artist was incapable of an imposition; and when the American laid down his money the painter said:

"My dear sir, I won't deceive you; and I had no intention of humbugging anybody, but some of these brother artists. That picture I made and smoked myself; and it is as true," said he, when he saw the incredulity of the American, "it is as true, as that I ever made and smoked a ham."

But still the American would not believe it; he thought the artist was "sick of his bargain," and resorted to this *ruse* to get off from the contract.

"No, no!" answered the American, "I have seen too many pictures. You can't make me believe it. There is not a man living who can paint that picture."

"Well," said the painter, "I will not take advantage of you, nor will I trouble the few men who are in the secret, to come in and give their testimony. But tell me one thing: if I will convince you, in five minutes, that I made that picture what will you give me for it?"

"I will pay the five hundred dollars," he replied, "and a commission for another at the same price."

"Done," said the artist. "Look here," tearing up a piece of the old canvas wrapped round the corner and nailed down. "Do you call that *old* or *new* canvas?"

The American looked at it carefully and saw on the clear white ground, printed in very legible characters, the name of the maker, and the place and date,—"*Belfast, 1838. 42½ yards. Warranted.*"

The artist had done this "on purpose," and the case was made out.

"What do you say now?" he asked. "I have won fairly, but I do not like bets; give me two hundred and

tain, if they are men of real ability, to have all the work they can do—but most of it is done for fifty dollars, which is more than the picture is worth, and I am satisfied.”

The American just at that moment bethought himself of an engagement he had with a friend ; and making some apology for his abruptness, left the studio, and the artist never saw him again except in the shop of a picture-vender, where he got well “ come up with ” for his treatment of one of his own countrymen. He purchased a painting which several who saw and persons too who knew what pictures are, assured me might be found in Florence for thirty dollars, and he paid four hundred dollars for it ! To finish the chapter, he passed it off at an American Custom House, as the work of an American artist (to save the duty) and it now adorns the saloon of — in New York, where the celebrated, gifted, and generous proprietor has, after making some use of the smoking, dusting, and acid processes, he learned from the above named artist, attempted to pass it off as the work of one of the greatest masters of the middle ages ! When it becomes necessary, I can call his name. So much for this generous patron of the fine arts !

But the best part of the story is yet to come, for I thought the matter worth tracing out to the end. An Englishman of taste and fortune, who had for a long time resided abroad, and was esteemed an accomplished *connoisseur*, hearing of the incident, visited the painter, and was so struck with the masterly ability with which this picture had been executed and smoked, that he laid down a hundred pound note of the Bank of England, upon the painter’s table, and said, without parley :

“ If this will induce you to part with the piece, I shall be happy to offer it to you in exchange for the picture.”

foreigners. They can judge with impartiality of the works of our artists, and when they come to contrast them with other artists of the same times, they often give their commissions to our own men. This is as much to their honor, as it is to the dishonor of our country that such things take place.

Merely contrast this spirit with that of other countries. I will cite one instance from the thousands I might mention. A young *Siene*se here, modelled a Cain and an Abel, which at once brought him into public notice, and his fame had no sooner reached

“Half the sum,” said the artist, “will be enough.”

“I’d rather say,” the gentleman replied, “that when you will paint me another as good as this, I’ll give you another note of the same value.”

This generous way of treating with artists is characteristic of English gentlemen of fortune. The artist again took up his palette, and executed in a few weeks a much finer piece, and smoked and besmeared it back the requisite number of centuries into antiquity, and *presented* it to his noble patron; who in his turn presented him with another hundred pound note, enclosed in a letter from London, with the postage paid.

When I heard of this story (and I’ve heard of more than one noble act of this kind of English gentlemen, for which I honor them) I thought it worth telling. It seems to me to come just to the *point*. The Englishman prized the picture because it was a *modern* work, done worthy of the ancient schools. The American despised it for the very same reason. So much for the difference between a real lover of the arts, and a man who buys pictures to be thought a person of taste.

his native city than she took him up, sent a delegation of the first men of Siena to invite him to receive the congratulations of his fellow-citizens. They gave him a triumphal entrance to the city, and strewed his path with garlands and crowned him with laurel.

“Fortunate for him he was not born an American,” said a gentleman from New Orleans to me, when I related to him the incident. “Fortunate, indeed,” thought I, too.

The English Government have excluded all foreign competition in the decorations of the New Houses of Parliament. They always give their valuable commissions to their own artists. France encourages her men of genius. No Frenchman is neglected by his Government or fellow-countrymen after displaying talent worthy of such encouragement; and for this reason they excel in almost every department of science and art; particularly those branches which are more in unison with the subtle and refined genius of her people. For whatever may be said by John Bull about the brains of a Frenchman lying in his heels, “for they do excel in dancing,” yet their excellence in many of the more elevated departments of the natural sciences and the fine arts, abundantly proves that they excel all other people in that “elegant fusion of imagination and sentiment” which constitutes the beauty of their national genius.

I might say the same thing of almost all other nations. A Sculptor (Hogan) went out from Ire-

land, some years ago, and has won a bright name in Rome. He has received several valuable commissions from his countrymen. His fame had no sooner reached Dublin than his native city gave him an order to execute a statue of O'Connell ; and I am told he has two thousand pounds for it (\$10,000).

A young man in Belgium, I was told the other day, made something that was esteemed considerably above mediocrity, and he was immediately taken up by the king and set to work on a commission for the court. Indeed, every country but ours encourages her own artists in preference to all others ; and all of them have devoted a portion of the public treasure to the promotion of the arts. But our government, it is supposed, have not the power, if they had the disposition, to do anything more to encourage the arts than by giving commissions, and perhaps it is well. Neither arts nor artists can be kept down in America for ever. The day will come when the genius of our artists will break forth, and the longer the day is delayed the brighter will break the morning. If we have then done anything worthy of honor, we shall not have to thank anybody but ourselves for our success. Moreover, in the strife for commissions, so corrupt have all parties become, the politics of the artist might have more weight with the government than the quality of his genius. I'd rather the government would limit itself to giving commissions ; for our people are intelligent, and they *will* take up our

artists by and by, when they are called for by public acclamation. But I hope our government will in future do one of two things,—either employ native artists, or, if they must have foreigners, select the best ; for the cost will be no more, and then we may flatter ourselves with some pretensions, at least, to good taste in the *selection* of artists, if we cannot boast of having produced them ourselves. It would be some honor to have chosen wisely, as well as to have paid generously, if the works we get do stand as apparent proofs of our destitution of native talent ; and it would not give posterity, or our enemies of the present age, occasion to say that we not only could not produce artists worthy of a place in our Capitol, but that we had not a man who could make a wise selection from the rest of the world : for coming times will be sure to repeat, what foreigners have so often taunted us with till now, that if we had had native artists of any merit, we should certainly have given them the preference.

I am aware that some of the foreign adventurers in our country, who have been so profusely patronized by our government, have claimed to be Americans on the score of citizenship ; but were their works never so renowned, would posterity give us credit for them ? What country claims Thorvaldsen and his works ? Denmark ; and yet those works were made in Rome. No Italian would venture to claim him. I know not if he had citizenship in Rome. I believe he received the honor of citizen-

ship from several countries, but this would have made no difference. Rome was his work-shop, and his work-shop did that city great honor; but what honor have we in being the work-shop, and making the Capitol the work-shop of men who never could have been employed as common workmen in the studios of the best sculptors? I hope I may live long enough to see those abominations in the niches of the Rotunda at Washington, battered down; that foreigners may no longer sneer at us, and say no better proof of our want of taste in the arts is needed, than may be found on the walls of our Capitol; for this has been said, and it ought to have cut us deeper than some other sayings that have disturbed us a good deal more, for this was true.

I have no further interest in this matter than what I feel in common with those of my fellow-countrymen who are capable of judging of these matters; for I have ample employment as it is, or I would not say what I do. I am a free and independent American, and can live without commissions from any government. But the time has been when I needed support from the Government, and would have gladly undertaken anything which would have given me bread. I was entirely overlooked; and the work Congress had voted money for, was given to a foreigner, who had asserted in my presence, that our people were destitute of taste, and consequently could not appreciate *him*, who was, he declared, *esteemed in Europe one of the first sculptors of the*

age. This gentleman said that when I came abroad I should be disgusted with myself and my works! When I came abroad, I inquired about the standing of this distinguished artist, and for a long time I could find no one that had ever known him, or even heard of his name. At last an American from Naples told me he had *inquired him out there*. Since then, I have heard several Italian sculptors speak of him as the man *employed* by the American Government. There are no works of his here I have ever heard of, and I venture to assert, that the first and last of his *great* works adorn our Capitol. Bienimai, Gibson, Flaxman, Chantrey, Teneranni, Canova, and even the great Thorvaldsen himself, would have been proud to have executed those works for our Capitol, and would have asked no more than has been paid for sculptures which do us little honor.

I have seen a notice of a resolution offered to Congress by Mr. Tappan, of Ohio, proposing to give me a commission of the busts of all the Presidents, and I presume Mr. Tappan was regulated in his estimate of the price, by the sum I received for Judge Marshall's bust. I feel grateful to that Senator for his kind feelings toward myself, and I mention this circumstance only to show that I am not unmindful of his generous recollection of me. But that price measures but poorly with what has been paid to others for the sculptures of the Capitol; and however much I should feel honored in being select-

ed as the artist, I must say that my circumstances and engagements would put it out of my power to undertake such a commission at the sum named ; for the sacrifice would be too great. Were my means sufficient, there would be no consideration of a pecuniary nature between me and my government—the honor of being esteemed worthy of a place in its Capitol would weigh more with me than all worldly considerations whatever.

But the time will come when this evil will regulate itself; and the day is not far distant, when if there be fifty good American sculptors, they will all be fully employed by the General and State governments. But yet this will not be in our time, I fear; and as for myself, I have little hope of ever receiving anything of importance while I am young enough to do it justice. It will be some satisfaction, however, to know that I have done my part in preparing the way, and borne my share of the burden pioneers in art, as well as in civilisation, have always had to sustain. Others will come after us, and find the road prepared by those who have gone before them, and cut their way through the deep wilderness, suffering many privations, and overcoming many difficulties, which will no longer stand in their way.

A little light broke in when Mr. Greenough received the commission of the colossal statue of Washington, and it was a source of very great satisfaction to me. I have always felt so—till the moment

I saw that noble work of an American sculptor taken away from Florence, to be sent to Washington. And had it been done with less ability, it would still have been a great honor to the artist and to the nation. Mr. Greenough is my friend: we have been together in Florence for years, and he knows he does not need my praise. I shall not complain when the commissions of Congress are given to my fellow-countrymen; whether I receive anything or not, it will never alter my feelings or opinions. It is sufficient for me to know that we have artists fully capable of executing such commissions, and in a manner which need fear no comparison with the works of artists of foreign nations. What has already been achieved, is enough to establish their title to the consideration of the Government.

Such a just and generous movement would probably give such an impulse to American art, that in a few years we might hope to rival or surpass all nations and all times. For we have all the materials in our own country necessary to contribute to such a result, if I except statuary marble, and I believe *it* will be found in any quantity as soon as it is needed; for it cannot be that the good Providence which scattered over our soil and hid away under its surface such exhaustless treasures, should have forgotten the statuary marble, unless, as all the world used to say, we should never have any need of such a material.

NOTHING, perhaps, contributes more to the progress of the arts in Europe than the honors paid to artists. There are continual illustrations of this, throughout all the European countries. When Thorvaldsden was in Florence the Grand Duke paid him particular honors, and entertained him at his palace with a sumptuous banquet, served in gold; and Princes and Cardinals were proud to be the guests on that occasion. The Grand Duke himself, too, gave every demonstration of being proud of his illustrious guest. Indeed, any artist of eminence is deemed a fit guest for Kings and Emperors; and more than one Sovereign in Europe has chosen such men for their intimate friends and companions. They sat at their tables, were at home in their libraries and galleries, and enjoyed their confidence. I doubt not an American President would condescend to walk the streets arm in arm (as many a King has done) with an illustrious artist, if such an one should visit our shores (for we abound in such displays of kindness and hospitality to almost everybody that comes among us, of any notoriety, particularly if they happen to be the *ton* at the moment); but he would stand a slim chance, I think, if he did not come with the odor of foreign approbation, if he would aspire to such an honor in our country, where I once heard a purse-proud vender of tape speak in terms of con-

tempt of a more than respectable painter I knew, who aspired to the hand of his daughter.

“Impudent puppy !” he exclaimed, with an air the French so appropriately call *superb*, “*why the fellow is not worth a dollar!*—offer himself to my daughter ! I’ll give him a *caning*, if he ever pretends to pull my bell-rope again.”

I do not now allude to our merchants as a body, for I have as much respect for them as any other class of citizens—and I will say more ; my observation teaches me that there is not in all Europe a class of men, connected with commerce, guided by such pure and lofty principles. I only allude to such *dollar-proud* creatures who regard the possession of property, however attained, as entitling them to carry their heads higher and look down more scornfully than any other men upon their really gifted fellow-citizens.

A merchant-tailor of Cincinnati, one of that select class who had got beyond the practical use of the needle, distinguished for his skill in fitting a coat, and who stood at the head of his profession, had a dispute with a merchant’s clerk, who carried a high head and was admitted to some of the first circles of the city. Happening to hear the tailor had said that if he (the clerk) had not cleared out from his shop just as he did, he would have given him a k—ki—kick (for this knight of the shears had an impediment in his speech), he told him, on the next meeting, that if he had been anything but a d——d tailor, he

would challenge him. Whereupon the knight replied that he would accommodate him, in that respect, by hiring himself out to some shopkeeper, and stand behind the counter for some weeks to sell tape, in order to br—bri—bring himself down to a level with him. Of the two, I am quite inclined to think better of the tailor than of the clerk.

The progress of art in all old countries may be traced in the monuments left by native artists ; and each country may trace its rise and progress to a class of founders who sprang up from the ranks of the people. Imitations will never lay a good foundation in any country. Instruction may be derived from them, as we may learn from imported goods to form a correct taste and perfect our own fabrics ; but we must experiment *ourselves* if we would *make* these goods. So with art ; native ambition must be excited, and however feeble may be our first efforts, as has always been the case in those countries where art has been carried to the highest perfection, still it is the only way to lay a foundation which will last. Indeed, it may be compared to the foundation of a beautiful edifice ; all is rough and massive below, the better to support the magnificent structure above. Cimabue, Giotto, Perugino and Massaccio lived before Raphael, and Titian, and Rubens, and Guido, who built upon the sure and massive foundations their great predecessors had laid. We may draw a good comparison from the vegetable kingdom. The plants which thrive best in a country, with a few

exceptions, are indigenous to it; or if not, they must be grafted upon a natural stock. So if we wish art to thrive with us, we must cultivate it ourselves, and upon our own soil. We may go abroad to learn, but we must not content ourselves with importations of foreign artists if we would ever accomplish anything ourselves. As well might we import the factories and laborers of Birmingham and Sheffield, and purchase only their productions, and still expect our own workmen to supersede them.

I would, in no instance, have any one suppose I cherish any hostility against foreigners of any description who have come to our country. I cherish on the contrary, I trust, as broad and generous a spirit, in this respect, as any of my countrymen; nor am I one of those who would countenance any measure calculated to suppress the constitutional rights, or the conceded privileges of our naturalized citizens. I regard all movements which have such tendency with suspicion and alarm.

But there is a spirit I do complain of, and as an American I feel that I have a right to complain of it: it is a spirit which does injustice to American artists, and, as far as it goes, has a direct tendency to smother everything like native art. This spirit not only admits the foreign artist upon the same platform the American artist of the same merit stands on (and I am willing this should be done), but it elevates the foreigner of no merit at all above our ablest artists. This is odious and unjust, and I

know that when I say this I only express the feeling universally entertained on this subject by all my brother artists, and by all Americans I have ever seen. And unless this matter arrests the attention of our government before long, I should not be surprised if when they come to send on their tardy commissions, they find a difficulty in getting our artists to execute them.

WE talk in America much about the glory of our heroes and statesmen, and we expect as Nelson did, "every man to do his duty;" and on one occasion, I believe it will be confessed, every man *did* do his duty. But have we as a people done our duty to those men? It may be answered, that to a certain extent we have toward the few grey-headed soldiers of that great revolutionary struggle; for just before they dropped into their graves we gave them an eleventh hour pension.

We are accused abroad of boasting of our country and its institutions, of our statesmen and military chieftains—and I believe we do occasionally indulge in such things,—but that is at most only a weakness. One would expect, however, on visiting our country, to find some proofs of our sincerity, and he naturally looks about him for those lavish displays of a country's pride, upon monuments erected to the memories of our illustrious dead, and their deeds.

Let us go to see the monuments to Washington, to Franklin, to Adams, to Jefferson, to Hamilton, to Patrick Henry, to Greene, to Decatur, to Lawrence,*

* The New Mirror for August 17th, 1844, contained a very affecting sketch, and one which awoke in my heart a feeling I shall not soon forget. It is a view of Lawrence's monument as it now stands dilapidated in Trinity Church yard in New York. If I were to attempt to find words adequate to express the deep mortification I felt as an American when I saw that sketch, I should fail in the effort. Can it be, thought I, that glorious hero sleeps under the ruins of a brick monument, which was erected only thirty years ago, and *that by his family?* when, had he been the brave captain of any other nation in the world, he would have been sleeping under a lofty monumental pile, that would defy the ravages of time.

What must foreigners think of us, I asked, and what must his venerable, and now childless widow, think of us, and what must we think of *ourselves*, when we look at those mournful ruins? Really, I do not see what reward brave men have in America, over cowards; for it is all useless to say that the monuments of such men are in the *hearts* of their countrymen.—A convenient mode, by the way, of erecting monuments to the great and the brave, and most particularly cheap withal. It is enough to make the cheek of an American burn with shame to look on those ruins, and then read that a private subscription is opened to repair the monument, or erect one worthy of such a chivalric chieftain.

Shame on the government that will allow such a monument even to have been built:—and built, too, by the brave man's own rations, or the dower of his widow! Shame on the government that allows it to tumble to ruins, and shame on the government that will allow such

and *all* the men who would *not* "give up the ship," and hardly one can be found, if I except that at Baltimore, which, after all, is not a *national* tribute, and the statue was made by a foreigner at that ; fortunately it is not the work of American genius. After such a survey, the foreigner exclaims in one of our own homely phrases, these people are "*all talk and no cider.*"

With the exception of Bunker Hill, I believe not a single battle-ground is honored by a national monument, and this is not a national structure ; and I have heard it said that it was raised in part by the contribution of a foreign *danseuse*. But it is the work of American genius, and in all the world there is not a more beautifully appropriate structure. But there are Lexington and Concord, Saratoga, Princeton, Yorktown, and New Orleans, and I believe not a monument of gratitude, or even of pride or triumph, is raised over the dust of the brave men who sleep under their soil. Indeed, it might be doubted if such glorious achievements had ever been performed there, were it not for the occasional upturning by a plough-share, of a brave man's bones, or the bayonet or bullet that laid him low.

heroism to go a-begging among private individuals to get a sixpence here and a shilling there, to repair an old brick monument, or build one little better over the dust of the hero, who prayed his comrades, when he could lift his arm no more for his country : "*Don't give up the ship, boys ! don't give up the ship !*"

Some years ago I returned to my native State, which I had left when a boy, eighteen years before. In the meantime a noble State House had been erected at Montpelier, of the granite of a neighboring hill. I observed two niches in the front portico, and the architect told me the building would not appear complete till they were filled with statues, but he feared it would be a long time before it would be done. I told him I already fancied them filled by her two great heroes, Allen and Starke. He told me it was just what he desired, and that he had left them for those two men.

“If anything,” says he, “can be done in this matter, I will let you know.”

It is now eight years, and I have never heard a word about it from him or any one else on the subject, and I *guess* I never shall.*

* During this time Powers has been struggling on in Italy, getting bread for his family by making busts. And it may, by a sort of poetical license, be said (so deep has his embarrassment sometimes been), that while those open niches were crying for statues, Powers' children were crying for bread. Not quite so bad, however; but no thanks to the generosity of anybody but private individuals.

“And yet,” said Powers to me once, “I'm proud of my native State.” I think it probable, too, she is proud of him; for our country has a happy way of maintaining a kind of general pride at the least possible expense. But with all the men of genius and taste, and high generous feeling, who adorn that State, with a full treasury, and

A very laudable effort is now making, not by the Government, which ought to have done it long ago, but by some generous individuals in America, to erect a monument to Washington ; and I hope they will succeed in erecting a *monument*. But a Public Edifice they propose to call a monument, which would have answered their purpose just as well, might have been had without the trouble and expense of building one. - I should be sorry to see so great a name as Washington's associated in a monument with Institutions, Libraries, Rooms for Art, Debating Societies, &c. ; all dignified by the name of a monument to our great Hero and Father. Almost as soon would I think of changing money in a church, or profaning the altars of God with traffic, as to convert Washington's monument into such a business-like place.

Monuments to the dead should never be made the habitations of the living ; they should be resorted to, to teach us how to live and how to die, and an eternal Sabbath should be kept around their graves. Let some imposing but solemn structure be raised over the *dust* of Washington—single in its purpose and single in its form. Let it be made of the most durable and massive materials ; and let it rise as high as a grateful nation can carry it—without spires, not a dollar in the form of debt, and with Allen and Starke for heroes, and the first sculptor in the world to honor them, it is a pity, to say the least, those niches should still cry on.

or turrets, or windows, or any other *littleness* to disturb the grandeur and solemnity of its design. Let it, in a word, be in harmony with the character of the man.

The most appropriate monument is that which, as far as the nature of such a thing can do, illustrates this character. It should be something analogous. If a man of taste and literary pursuits, his tomb should be embellished with ornaments, and all its proportions should present a classic appearance; if a military hero, his monument should be in keeping with the spirit of loftiness, and breathe the soul of daring and glory, so that his character might be clearly known without reading the inscription. And such is the richness and fertility of the genius of the fine arts, as understood by great artists, their language is even more expressive in the hands of the master, than any other language in the world.

But a monument to such a man as Washington, who is not regarded as a scholar, nor even so much as a military hero, or statesman, as one of those exalted characters that stand far above all other men, embracing all that is noble known to humanity, and even something we may almost regard as divine; one who never lived before, nor is likely ever to live again;—his monument should be as distinct from all others, as he was from all other men. A classic monument would not do for him, nor a military monument, nor any other peculiar style; for none of them can reach him. No little thing should

be introduced in it ; no petty parts or decorations ; it should be distinct and unbroken, and rise in solemn grandeur, a simple mass of vast bulk and height, so that it might be seen across a plain fifty miles off, surmounted by his stature of such colossal proportions, it might be recognized, if possible, even at that distance as the statue of Washington. And this would not be so difficult as might appear ; for such were his form and general proportions, so different from all other men, and so expressive of himself, that the most feeble attempt at his likeness never fails to be recognized. His person was as distinct from other men as was his character.

But of what form should be his monument, to express the durability of his fame, and at the same time embody and illustrate that solemnity of character so peculiarly his own ? Before answering this question, we should look for guidance, and inquire what human structures have stood the longest, and will probably descend farthest into coming ages. And at the same time what are the most expressive, and excite the greatest wonder over successive races of men.

Are they solemn temples, or sumptuous palaces, or lofty towers, or massive obelisks, or solid columns, or colossal statues ? The learned have spent ages in disputing about the site of Babylon, with her gorgeous temples, and Thebes, with her hundred brazen gates. The ruins even of Roman structures, reared less than two thousand years ago, have long

been preserved with sacred veneration; and the temples of Greece are mournful heaps. But the Pyramids of Egypt still lift their awful forms over the desert, and have watched the rise and the fall of a long succession of Empires. Human knowledge gropes back through dim ages to find the era of their beginning, and still time strives in vain to overwhelm them. The obelisks lie scattered around the desert, or have been carried away by distant travellers; and the Memnon lies prostrate in the dust. The great cities that once stood on the banks of the Nile, are levelled with the ocean of sand around them; and almost every vestige of the work of man has passed away in the flowing tide of ages. But the Pyramids still stand and still rear themselves as vast as ever; stupendous beacons to the traveller from distant countries; piercing the clouds, where they catch the first blush of morning that flames on their summits, as fair as in the morning of Creation; defying the barbarous hand of the spoiler, and the sweeping desolation of ages.

Why were they made? This question we may answer with certainty—they were raised for monuments. They contained the ashes of the dead, and a platform was left on their tops, we have good reason to infer, to receive colossal statues or figures in illustration of the dead beneath them. This would seem to be certain, for the science which built them never would have left them incomplete without an object.

And where is there in the universe anything

human like them but the character of Washington, and what monument could we raise so appropriate to the Father of our Country ?

Washington's fame we well know can never die—it would outlive the Pyramids, without a monument and without a line of eulogy. But a long line of generations is to follow us ; and when they come upon the stage for their brief hour in the sweep of ages, each one to ask that distant Republic whose history will then have grown dim, what monument of gratitude she left to her Glorious Deliverer, let them turn to some pyramidal structure surmounted by a vast statue of Washington, of everlasting bronze :

“ Like some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale and midway leaves the storm :
Though round its base the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.”

Let us build such a cliff—“ Let it,” in the noble language of Webster, “ rise till it meet the sun in his coming ; let the earliest light of the morning gild it, and let parting day linger and play on its summit.”*

* Contrast such a monument with that building proposed to Washington, which, instead of being a monument to the dead, is to be commodiously erected, with rooms for 4th of July clubs (for it will come to that), libraries, associations, and other multifarious purposes—for the living politician and orator. I doubt not this was proposed first by a clique of architects who wanted a good job—a building which a park of artillery or a barrel of gunpowder

The plan of a pyramidal monument may be deemed too expensive ; and it would be, unless undertaken by the Government, provided it were built as broad at the base and as high as the pyramids of Egypt. But when the Government is ready to erect a monument to Washington, worthy of the man, the cost of it will be no consideration to stand in the way.

This is the plan I have always had in my mind, and I believe it to be the one which will finally prevail ; for however slow we may be in America in coming to a just standard of taste in the Arts, we are certain to get right at last. Public intelligence will educate and correct public opinion and general taste, and when we once get fairly started, our progress, I hope, may be as rapid as our steps have been in Political Economy and the Mechanic Arts. But it will perhaps be long before we are prepared for so sublime a structure ; and in the meantime, every work of genius taken to America, will exert its agency in preparing us for it. Nor would such a monument, even if executed to-day, stand in the way or even dispense with the necessity of other smaller works ; which will not only encourage our artists in

touched off by another burner of our Capitol, would soon bring to the dust. Such day-dreams (if indeed they be worthy of so poetic a term) should at least be called by their right names—for the plan proposed is better fitted for the *boudoir* of a dancing-girl, or a temple for the inauguration of another goddess of Reason than for a monument.

their noble endeavors, but elevate and inflame the National feeling of the country.

Another design (for the *Capitol*) has been often proposed—a colossal statue in bronze of Washington in a standing attitude. It would be a beautiful tribute to the man—it would do more honor to us than to him—and it would be in keeping with our Temple of Liberty. I only hope Congress will stop talking about it, and go to doing something.

A WORD ABOUT MICHAEL ANGELO.—Perhaps no man ever lived who had a more profound knowledge of anatomy than Michael Angelo; and he was so fond of displaying it on all occasions, that, in my humble opinion, his works have suffered from it not a little. Every bone, muscle, tendon, and I might say fibre, is distinctly marked out; and in order to make a greater display of all these, he has studied to obtain the most difficult and uneasy attitudes possible. As instances of this, I mention his celebrated statues of Day and Night in the Church of St. Lorenzo, at Florence. An Irish sculptor on first beholding them, said they made him think of a very large rind of bacon on a gridiron—and this remark contained a very just criticism; for they are all in the most uneasy attitudes, particularly the sleeping figure; so much so, that I venture to say, no person could sleep five minutes in such a posture. These figures may be said to be twisted, so painful is their

position ; and yet they are all very grand and noble works. I must say, however, they would have been much more so, in my estimation, had their positions been more natural. I doubt not men and women could *endure* such postures as a punishment, but they would not choose them for repose.

He also pronounced certain details of his figures with too much severity. No nails were ever found on human hands so deeply and strongly set ; the knuckles appear like knobs ; and the eyes are not formed for use, for the pupils are flat, and the lids hard and constrained in their action.

He often violated proportion—the necks of some of his figures are extremely short, while others are extravagantly long. This is easily proved by measurement, and cannot be justified by nature, which is the only criterion we can go to. The feet of some of his figures are too small ; indeed but a little larger than the hands. The Greeks in their best works never violated the rules of proportion. In his statue of Moses (I have not seen the original, but an excellent cast from the head of it), there is an extraordinary mal-formation in the head. The ears are too high up on the head ; and if we measure from the chin to the ears, we find the lower jaw of the most extravagant length ; so much so, as to amount almost or quite to a deformity. It was well Moses was inspired, for if his cranium was like that Michael Angelo had given him, he stood in sad need of some aid in the upper story—for phrenology would deny

him common sense ; and yet the expression of this face is really sublime, but it would have been immeasurably grand had its proportions been correct.

If it were possible to remove from a man a portion of the back of his head, and also move his ears to a greater elevation without injury, his face might still express all or nearly all it did before ; but we find that the features of a great man are always associated with corresponding developments of brain, and this should be borne in mind by artists when they attempt to represent in portrait or ideal an elevated character.

Few of Michael Angelo's statues are finished ; and it has been said this was owing to his intense occupation on so many works, which left him no time to complete them. But I have noticed in those at Florence that the most important parts are finished with great care ; inferior portions only are left in obscurity. In this way he gave a key to his design, and we see the entire figure almost as well as we could have done, had they been entirely finished, and not unlikely better in some, for it is more than doubtful if he would not have lessened the effect in some instances. In his Bacchus there are great defects in proportion which he would have run into by completing the statue. This is the case also with his David, the faults of which have been charged to the thinness of the block of marble from which it was cut. But this is evidently a mistake. He finished it entirely, instead of leaving that part in the rough where the deficiency is alleged to

have existed—for he was not a man to lose such an occasion of throwing the fault (had he conceived it to be one) upon the marble, in spite of the critics, instead of leaving his successors to impute it to himself.

His Bacchus has been made celebrated not so much by its high perfections, as by the curious manner in which it was produced. I allude to his having buried it; first breaking off a hand, to deceive the critics who were snarling around his heels, and bring them into contempt. They declared he could not execute a work in the style of the ancients. At that time all was the rage for imitating the Greeks and Romans, and every fragment of antique sculpture discovered, was esteemed a model of perfection. He buried the Bacchus, which he esteemed one of his inferior works, and managed to have it discovered and dug up. The critics were in ecstasies. Michael Angelo came along with the missing hand in his pocket, and listened to their remarks.

“What a pity it was,” they all said, “a statue so beautiful, so perfect, in all other respects, should lack the hand.”

“Suppose I should furnish that myself?” replied the grave Buonarotti, as he produced the fragment. The critics were most likely scarce for the next few days!

Michael Angelo's style is unlike that of any other man of any age. He has produced a series of men and women who have been justly called a race of

giants and giantesses, for, whether large or small, they really appear so. He had, besides, a wonderful power of expression which has never been equalled in modern times. But the Greeks surpassed him, not only in proportion, but in expression too.

But of course you appreciate the spirit in which I say these things. It all amounts only to this: Michael Angelo was not perfect; and had he been, he would have ceased to be a man. I feel, perhaps, more veneration for him, than for any artist in the world's history. He was a vast, colossal character, morally and intellectually, like his own works. He was the great Restorer of the Arts of the middle ages. He has been the author, perhaps, of more grand and lofty conceptions, than any other man; and he will be regarded by all coming time, without a question, as the Patriarch of Sculpture. Others have followed him who have surpassed him in some points, just as Dante has in some respects surpassed Homer, and Bancroft and Prescott, Tacitus. But Michael Angelo, like the Pyramids, will never fall; and in all future ages he will command the admiration and homage of mankind.

HERE, courteous Reader, we part—reluctantly too—with the Sculptor. Are you not glad, now, that I once learned to write shorthand, and that I overcame the repugnance of Powers to appear in print. I wish you would lay all the blame of the mistakes and the blunders you have seen, on my shoulders; I can afford to bear it. I was reading some of these sheets to Tuckerman, who has written better about American artists than almost anybody; for he has written *con amore*, as the phrase goes, and I like it well enough; and he said, as I laid down the proofs—

“He is the same good fellow he was eight years ago, when he first went to Florence, and began his up-hill sculpture life. I happened to pass through Florence just about the time of his arrival. He could not talk three words of Italian—he could not find workmen who could do justice to his models—his little boy, a noble fellow who had his father’s eye, grew sick and died. Poor Powers! I was with him through it all. His busts had not arrived, and he feared they were lost at sea—his wife was sad and homesick, and wanted to go back to her home and her friends—he had spent a great deal more than he expected to in crossing the Continent from Havre—and for a while his resolution seemed to give way; he looked like the picture of despair! But—

“Now, my dear fellow!”—I was obliged to break in upon him; for printers’ devils are sad teachers of good manners;—“this is all very good—capital; but the devil is here, and my proofs are not ready. Will you go straight home, and put it all down on paper to-night, and let me have it to-morrow to put in my book?”

Tuckerman has no *no* for his friends in all his vocabulary. So off he posted to execute my request. “I hope I shall not keep you up all night, my brother,” I had just time to say as he fastened the door; “but I must have this to-morrow morning at ten. I cannot keep my printers waiting,—they are good fellows.”

“You shall have no occasion. To-morrow before ten, such as it is, you shall have it,” was his kind reply.

Before ten, true to his word, the writing came. I had just time to see that it was just what I wanted. I know you would not pardon me, Reader, if I did not give it to you. Here it is.

“NEW YORK, October 2, 1845.

“DEAR SIR :

“You desire to learn my impressions of Powers, and I readily accede to your request. We met in Florence in the autumn of 1837. He had but recently arrived, and was known in America chiefly through several busts of distinguished men, which were generally thought remarkably authentic. There

were in the appearance, conversation and works of Powers, at this period, the clearest indications of genius; but they were not of that impressive and fascinating character which the imagination associates with such an idea. No startling wildness of temperament or eccentricity of habits, no delicate susceptibility or extravagant opinions suggested the belief that our subsequently illustrious countryman possessed rare gifts. His eye, as you are aware, is singularly large and eloquent, and his head decidedly intellectual. Beyond these, no outward sign gives token of his mission. But, to a reflective observer, there are more genuine signatures of innate power, than the multitude recognize. Without any winning grace of deportment or brilliancy of discourse, there was visible in Powers a self-possession, a freedom from affectation, and an integrity of deportment that at once conveyed the feeling that he was no ordinary man.

“Genius is a vague term; but in reference to a man like this, it is perfectly intelligible. His force lies within the region of obvious and palpable results. It is cool, legible and bold. It is the energy of mind conscious of its endowments, not overwhelmed by them. To no mysterious world of dreams does he look for revelations. In no wondrous realm of imagination are his images created. With the natural world around us, in its simple and existent beauty, does his perception deal. His special faculty is, first of all, to see justly, next to appreciate wisely, and

at last to embody faithfully the elements of natural beauty which God has freely scattered over the earth. The eclectic philosopher accepts the fragments of truth he finds in various systems, and unites them into a rational whole. Powers realizes a similar principle in art. He combines and harmonizes what nature has distributed. Accordingly, it is more appropriate to call him real than ideal. He once pointed out to me on the plaster cast of a beautiful child's face the minutest changes which death had caused, and the manner in which the expression of life could be restored in the marble, with a minuteness that evinced most impressively his intimate acquaintance with nature as existent in the human physiognomy. His casual remarks on the works of art in the public galleries were equally significant.

He is not the Raphael of Sculptors; for there is not in his organization any great refinement. Of much that is inward and profound in sympathy and feeling, he is an inadequate representative, and has more humor than sentiment. It appeared to me very natural that he should read scarcely any poet but Burns. I should call him more human than delicately spiritual, not impressible so much as sincerely observant. This is an advantage; for it precludes that morbid development so frequent in genius of a different order. Happily there is no painful discrepancy between the conception and execution of Powers. The hand deftly follows the eye, and the eye the mind. It is nature that lends him both in-

spiration and material. In conversation, I was struck with the fact that nearly all his illustrations were drawn from physical fact. He compared, for instance, the movement of a bird's eye he was describing, to the vibration of the second hand of an old-fashioned clock; and the appearance of an organ in a dim cathedral, to that of a large wasp's nest he had once seen in a cave. In a word, it seemed to me that the vocation of Powers, ordained by his organization and idiosyncrasies, is that of an interpreter of nature,—not as to time, or condition, or history, or quality,—but as to *form*. This he does literally in his busts, and poetically in his statues. The latter are combinations, every detail of which is a genuine transcript; the genius consists first in seizing the element, and next in harmoniously blending it with its kindred; thus, as it were, redeeming the fragmentary and perverted shapes of humanity to their primeval glory, by embodying in marble the type of nature as she would assert herself if freed from the conventional blights and boundaries of custom and error. Thus the genius of Powers is singularly healthful. Some lament that it was not earlier developed; I cannot but regard this as one of the best evidences of its reality. No fatal precocity mars such gifts in their bloom. There is something in the whole career of this remarkable artist which strikes me as eminently American. His powers are of that sustained and effective character which accords with the spirit of

our country. They matured gradually, and in the prime of his life they are universally acknowledged by the most competent judges of the old world. I am rejoiced to hear from you that Powers retains his simplicity of character and unpretending habits. They accord delightfully with the noble spirit of his art. I trust his country will gratefully avail herself of his fame, and consecrate one of its enduring memorials to her own soil.

Truly yours,

H. T. TUCKERMAN.

TO C. EDWARDS LESTER, }
U. S. Consul at Genoa. }

A LETTER

ON THE

ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW CONSULAR SYSTEM IN THE
UNITED STATES.

WITH GLANCES AT THE ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF THE CONSULAR
ESTABLISHMENTS OF ANCIENT AND MODERN NATIONS—THE EVILS
OF OUR PRESENT SYSTEM, THE REMEDY, ETC., ETC.

ADDRESSED TO

HON. WM. W. CAMPBELL, MEMBER OF CONGRESS ELECT,
FROM THE CITY OF NEW YORK.

DEAR SIR :

Reposing confidence in your abilities, your practical intelligence, and your patriotism, the People of New York have made you one of their Representatives in the next Congress, and I beg leave to address to you a communication on a matter which very nearly concerns their best interests and the commercial prosperity and reputation of our entire country.

We have now reached a point in our history around which those great issues are gathering which will decide our fate in time to come. The Infancy of our Nation is passed—our manhood is come—with its nervous energy, its deep and solemn purposes,

its irresistible strength. The men of our times have risen upon a theatre where a new drama will be played—its character, its machinery, its acting, and its *dénouement*, unknown before, and uncopied from former generations. The Anglo-Saxon dominion must one day cover this continent; this is now reduced only to a question of *time*. The hope of the world has been “broken to the heart of man” by every great empire that has yet overshadowed the nations, and mankind have waited for some grand movement which should give repose to the fever of expectation. Humane, hoping, philosophical men, greeted the French Revolution with enthusiasm; they thought that the great work of regenerating the old world would then be consummated. We know the result. History itself, with her wearied pen, and tired Hope, have waited for our Age and our Republic.

It becomes to the thoughtful man, a question of grave and earnest import, shall this last trial for man and for God fail? How shall the fearful elements among us be controlled, and how shall we bear our name and our influence, our commerce, our arts, and our literature abroad among the nations? Many intelligent men contemplate the meeting of the next Congress with an interest they have never felt for any other that has yet assembled. The dominion of party, under whose dictatorial sway the country and its best interests are forgotten, seems in a measure to be broken. Very many Representatives and Senators go unshackled to their posts, ready to lend

their influence to any movement which will tend to foster a wide National Spirit throughout the country.

From conversations I have been favored with, with the President and his Cabinet, and many distinguished statesmen, as well as from the general spirit of our best Journals, I am led to hope, that, among other important considerations that will be likely to come before Congress, and win the support of all patriotic men, the revision of our Consular System will stand out prominent.

Hoping I might contribute in some humble manner, to the consummation of a measure of such vital importance, I thought you would pardon me for laying before you the following Considerations.

This matter has often arrested the attention of successive Congresses. The evils of our present system are so glaring, the subject has been so often and so ably discussed, the conviction has for many years been so universal, that some change ought to take place; and above all, the entire commercial system of America so imperiously demands bold and immediate action, that I can discover no reason to justify our National Legislature in its insensibility and neglect.

Our conversations on this subject have convinced me, that I may rely upon your giving the matter your most earnest endeavors. I do not feel competent to discuss the subject with the ability it demands, and I have waited for some one better qualified, to lead the way—but I have waited in vain, and have deter-

mined at last, to do what I can, to contribute in some humble manner to the beneficent change I hope for. It seems to me to be the duty of men born in a free State, where liberty of thought and freedom of action exist, to illuminate questions of public interest by the lights of experience. "And," in the language of Mr. Livingston, "who would question even the right of consuls to complain of the abuses of the system under which they suffer in the service of their Government, although they sought a change chiefly for their own advantage—and last of all, when the change they sought for was so essential to the great interests of the State?"

As public servants, they feel that they too are entitled to their share of the fruits of a free and a liberal Government—at least all those feel it who honor their country by their representation. This number I am well convinced is not small.—"For all the wonder is," as Mr. Livingston once remarked in my hearing, "not that we have bad consuls, but that we have good ones—for we have taken a great deal of pains to settle upon the worst Consular system in the world—and no thanks to us, if we are not represented by men as universally bad as the system under which they serve." In order to do what little justice the limits of my letter will allow to so great a subject, it will be desirable to consider :

I. THE ORIGIN AND DESIGN OF THE CONSULAR SYSTEM.—We have derived this term from the

ancient Romans. When the Tarquins were driven from Rome, and the Commonwealth established, the Government of the State was committed to two Consuls, who represented the power and the dignity of the nation, and were regarded with the greatest reverence by the people, and by foreign princes. They were chosen annually, by a general election, and for a long period the office was filled by the purest and most illustrious names in Rome. No one could aspire to the consulship with any hope of success, who had not rendered some signal service to the State. They held correspondence with kings, and gave audience to foreign ambassadors. Their *insignia* (with the exception of the crown) were like those of kings. They had the control of the Roman armies, and led them out to battle. They were the guardians of the public honor, and the public safety, at home and abroad ; and so faithfully did they execute their high trust, that it was under their administration Rome made her name feared throughout the world.

In the latter periods of the Republic, Consuls were frequently placed over the Government of the Provinces ; and the custom prevailed even under the Empire, till its final downfall. Some of the greatest historians have attributed the glory and the power of Rome chiefly to her Consular office, without which, they tell us, she never could have controlled her distant colonies and consolidated her home empire.

But although the term, Consul, is derived from the old Romans when they were led on by Brutus to the achievement of their independence, yet the *office* of such public agents was far more ancient than the era of Roman Liberty. We have the positive lights of history to guide us to such a conclusion. All the maritime nations of antiquity had their commercial agents in foreign countries visited by their vessels or trading citizens; sent to guard their interests, and protect their property and lives. Without such protection, every adventurer who committed his property to the sea, was certain to fall into the hands of pirates or be treated with injustice in foreign ports. In few of the ancient nations was there any regard paid to individual rights. The sacredness of private rights was a principle almost as entirely unknown as the operations of galvanism. We have heard much of the civilisation of Rome; but while her orators and poets were bringing her beautiful tongue to classic perfection, and sculptors and architects were transmitting to future times their matchless ideals of grace and beauty, she treated all foreign nations as her natural foes. A vessel driven by stress of weather upon her coasts was confiscated and her crew put to death. In those days, might so effectually constituted right, that the weaker party no more thought of asking for justice than the enemy conquered in battle hoped for mercy.

The Phenicians, who became so celebrated for their extended commerce, acknowledged no law but

that of force, in their dealings with other people. The Tyrians were characterized by the utmost barbarity in all their intercourse with foreigners; and scenes of the most refined cruelty were enacted in their ports, when the stranger was cast upon their mercy. The Carthaginians were perhaps still more avaricious and terrible in their treatment of the people. Strabo tells us that every foreign sailor caught on their coasts was cast into the sea. And Polybius informs us that while they held the island of Sardinia no Roman sailor was allowed to touch its soil. Historians concur, without dissent, in the fact that the Phenicians derided all idea of justice, honor and right in their intercourse with foreigners. Nor, perhaps, can any commercial power of antiquity be exempted from this general charge of injustice, cruelty and avarice, except the people of Rhodes. For a considerable period, they had scarcely a rival upon the sea; and yet historians agree that they founded and extended their naval dominion on principles of international justice and freedom of the seas. "Their code of maritime legislation," says Warden, "was adopted by the Roman Emperors, by Augustus and by the Antonines, for decision of naval and commercial disputes. The ports of Rhodes were open to all trading nations who equally enjoyed the protection of a wise and humane legislation."

It is a cheerful province for the historian, and for all those writers who present portions of human history for the contemplation of their own times, to

hold up such beautiful instances of true civilisation to the admiration of the world. For although we are told that civilisation has been steadily advancing in all ages (and in a limited sense this is true), yet the student of history traces its progress only as the allied sovereigns did the concealed path of the Austrian army, by watchfires kindled on the Bohemian mountains. More than one bright light flames over the summits of antiquity, but all around is thick darkness. A striking illustration is furnished in Rome's vaunted civilisation, which may all be summed up in a word—universal spoliation abroad, and cruel oppression at home.

Such was the spirit of antiquity, and such the obstacles that attended the growth of commerce in primitive times. We must go back to those early periods to trace the origin of that commercial magistracy which has, in all ages, proved the only safeguard of commerce. For although the title of such magistrates, and the power vested in them, have been subject to every degree of variation, yet, from the earliest times, those nations who extended their maritime relations to foreign countries, always delegated public agents to watch over their interests, and protect their citizens in the pursuit of gain.*

* Mr. Warden, in his valuable work on "the Origin, Nature, Progress and Influence of Consular Establishments," has given an important, although a limited and imperfect view of this interesting subject; and it is deeply to be regretted that our Government have received no

In the early history of these maritime adventures "the Greeks had an officer of this description, named *Προξενος*, who was instructed by a decree of the people, to receive and entertain strangers, and to act as a judge and conciliator of the disputes of foreign merchants. His functions, in some respects, resembled those of a modern Consul. At Sparta, this honor was the price of signal services, rendered by the person on whom it was conferred, and was advantage from his praiseworthy production. It has been printed more than thirty years, and is well known in Europe, although it is scarcely known in America. While he was Consul General of the United States at Paris, in 1813, his attention was drawn to the subject; and in his work, dedicated to the President and Senate of the United States, he has collected a good many valuable facts, and offered many valuable suggestions which he had every reason to hope would be adopted by his country. They would have been adopted by any other nation, and he would have received some token of consideration for the great public service he rendered. But I have been informed that he did not even receive a reply to his communication when he forwarded his work in MS. to the Department of State, with a request that it might be published; and that the only edition printed, was the one he superintended in Paris, and paid for out of his own pocket. Such criminal neglect of the services of her public agents, on the part of our Government, has a direct tendency to crush every noble effort to better the nation. In another portion of my letter, I shall endeavor to show how much we have lost, and how much foreign Governments have gained by the widely different policy that controls them in this respect.

attended with various privileges and immunities. He received ambassadors, assisted at the national assemblies, and presided at religious ceremonies and public *fêtes*.

At Athens, the affairs of the *Προξενία* could not be judged but by the Polemarch, or their archos. The Delians decreed them grants of land, the first places at sacrifices, public *fêtes*, and free entry into the Senate and assembly of the people. Like the Consuls of modern times, they affixed over the outer door or entrance of the house, the arms of the town of which they were the agents.

In Athens and some other Greek towns, agents resided who were clothed with supreme judicial powers, and they controlled all the maritime affairs of the nations they represented.

“The Epidamnians, a colony of Corcyrians established in Macedonia on the Adriatic Gulf, appointed a magistrate to regulate their commerce with the Illyrians, a neighboring nation whose influence they dreaded. Teos, the birth-place of Anacreon, and other towns of great antiquity, had magistrates named *Timuques*, whose employment was to superintend commercial affairs. The *Prætor mercatorum* of the Romans, like the commercial magistrates of the Greeks, decided the disputes of sailors in the cabin of the vessel to which they belonged. When Sicily and Sardinia became provinces of the Roman Empire, they were governed by *Prætors*. Spain, after

its subjugation, was also governed by a magistrate of the same description."

All the Roman Colonies were committed to the government of magistrates, who, under various titles, were vested with all those powers which have since been committed by different nations to Consular Agents. In some instances, these prerogatives appertained to the supreme magistrate; in others, the Imperial Government made a division of power; and while all civil affairs were controlled by the executive magistrate, every commercial interest was committed to the administration of the Consul.

We have but few lights to guide us, in tracing minutely the history of the commerce of the ancient world; but we can clearly trace the advancement of the wild piracy of barbarian adventurers, down to the organization of the commercial codes, which have grown out of the system of modern States. In this gradual revolution no agency has been so powerful as the Consular System, none has contributed so much to the advancement of commerce and maritime law.

It has long been a disputed point with whom the modern Consular System originated, and what nation first led the way, in the establishment of the commercial code, which was finally adopted by modern States, and has, in our times, worked itself so deeply into the Law of Nations. It is, perhaps, the most interesting question connected with the rise of modern civilisation. Nor could it be placed in its proper

light without great toil, and learning, aided by all the facilities which might be derived from investigations conducted on the shores and islands of the Mediterranean. But a diversity of opinions has prevailed on this point, among learned men, which can hardly be accounted for; for, it seems to me, that the archives of Florence and Pisa place the matter beyond dispute.

Pisa was the first Republic that rose into power after the dismemberment of the Roman Empire; and to her modern times are more indebted for their civilisation than to any other people who have flourished since the ancient Romans. She has certainly no pretended rival in the *antiquity* of her commercial laws except the Republic of Amalfi. That brave and enlightened people established their power on the Gulf of Salernum, and held at one time almost undisputed possession of the Southern Mediterranean seas. They framed a regular Maritime Code, which neighboring commercial nations were forced to obey. They had, from the time of Justinian, been entrusted with a most sacred treasure,—a MS. copy of the Roman Pandects, which was destined one day to exert a high agency in the advancement of civilisation. Giannone, in his *Storia Civile del Regno di Napoli*, has observed that from the Tables of Amalfi we have derived all our laws on navigation. This statement should perhaps be received with some modification. He is entitled to more concurrence not unlikely in the opinion he advanced, that the

laws of Amalfi originated less from the maritime experience of that people, than from the Eastern emperors with whom they carried on a wide and constant traffic.

Brenemannus, in his second Dissertation on the History of Amalfi, supposes the enlightened maxims of this Code to have been derived from the copy of the Pandects known to have been in their possession for many ages

Being exceedingly anxious to arrive at some well sustained conclusion on this point, I made what investigations I could in Florence and in Pisa, and was favored with the result of the studies of several of the learned Jurists of Tuscany, who have devoted much attention to the matter. I am well persuaded Pisa can date her commercial power and perhaps her maritime code to an earlier age than even the Republic of Amalfi.

Almost every Jurist of England and America has fallen into a mistake on the origin of the *Consolato del Mare*. The opinion has commonly prevailed that this noble Code originated with the commercial cities of Spain; and the idea has been often advanced, that Arragon and Barcelona can date their commercial power and civilisation to a more ancient period than Pisa. But such an opinion, however commonly entertained, is controverted by indubitable facts.

In the year 1130 the Pisans effected the conquest of Amalfi, and bore away with them its most pre-

cious treasure—the only copy of the Justinian Pandects in existence. To this cause more than one respectable writer has attributed the origin of the Maritime Laws of Pisa. But we have documentary and historical proofs that the Pisans had formed a maritime code long before this period, and that the discovery of the Pandects and the Tables of Amalfi had little to do with the *Leggi Pisane*, or the *Leggi Nautiche*, which were published in Rome in 1075. This Code, which was composed of the Maritime Statutes of the Pisan Republic, enacted during successive centuries, gave origin to what was afterwards known as the *Consolato del Mare*. In fact, it was not only the basis of that Code, but it constituted the body of the Code itself. The Barcelonians, or more properly, the Kings of Arragon, adopted the Pisan Code almost without modification; but that Code which is now known under the title of *Consolato del Mare* is much more modern than the first Code which bore that name. The *Pisani Statuti* were published in Rome in 1075, and received the sworn observance of Rome that year*—they were adopted

* In Rome, in the month of March, 1075, the Pisan Code received the oath of the Romans in S. Giovanni Laterano, to observe them for ever.

In Acre, in September, 1111, they received the oaths of the King Ludovico and the Count of Toulouse, for the Government of the Christian empire in the Holy Land.

In Majorca, in 1112, the Pisans, who then held sway in that Island.

In Pisa, in the Church of St. Pietro del Mare (the Mari-

at Acre, in 1111 ; at Majorca, in 1112 ; Marseilles, 1162 ; Genoa, 1186 ; Rhodes, 1190 ; Venice, 1215 ; Germanic States, 1224 ; Sicily, 1225 ; Nantes, 1250 ; and Constantinople in 1262. These statements are

ner's Church), the Podestà, Ambrogio Migliari assembled the Pisans, and made them take an oath before the altar, to observe these statutes in all foreign countries.

In Marseilles, in the month of August, 1162, the same oath was taken.

In Almeria, in 1174, by the Count of Barcelona and the agent of the Genoese.

In Genoa, 1186, the municipal authorities of that city, assembled the citizens on the head of the Mole, to take the oath of perpetual fidelity.

In Brandi, in 1189, in February, by King William.

In Rhodes, in 1190, by Galeta.

In Morea, in 1200, by the Prince of Morea.

In Constantinople, in 1215, by the Commune of Venice, in the Church of St. Sophia, by King John.

In Germany, in 1224.

In Messina, in 1225, by the Bishop of Catania, in the Church of S. Maria Nuova, for the Emperor Frederick.

In Paris, in 1250, by John of Belmonte, for the King of France, who was ill, in the presence of the Knight-Templars, the Hospitallars, and the Admiral of the Levant.

In Constantinople, in 1262, in the Church of S. Angelo, by the Emperor Paleologus.

Syria and Constantinople in 1270, by Frederick, King of Cyprus, and by the Emperor Constantine.

In Majorca, by King James of Arragon.—(Extract from the Consolato del Mare, pp. 15, 16. Venice Edition of 1713)

confirmed by the learned Essay of D. Francesco Masi, of Pisa—"Della Navigazione e Commercio, della Repubblica Pisana : Pisa : 1797." He there adduces an array of evidence, including some of the first judicial authors of Italy, and even of Spain, which ought to satisfy every candid mind.

To this learned author, and to the "Sistema Universale dei Principj del Dritto Marittimo di Europa ; Firenze : 1795," I appeal for the support of my opinions on these points, and others I shall consider in tracing the rise of the Modern Consular System.

In the *Consolato del Mare*, we find a clear provision for the appointment, &c., of Consuls. The first eight chapters are devoted exclusively to the Consuls, and their powers and provinces are clearly defined. We learn from the Chronicles of Pisa, that wherever her commerce was extended among foreign nations, she was represented by her own Consuls. But about the close of the 11th century, she had nearly perfected the Modern Consular System. More than a hundred years before, she had established a magistracy of two consuls at home, who constituted a Supreme Admiralty Court, to take cognizance of all marine cases. This Court received the sanction of Gregory VII. (Azuni.)

During some negotiations carried on between the Pisans and the Emperor Alexis, an interruption of friendly intercourse took place. The Republic seized the emperor's son, and threw him into prison, and the price they demanded for his liberation was

the establishment of their Maritime Code in his empire, with inviolability to the Consuls of the Republic. Her Consular System, which was the soul of her Maritime Code, was readily adopted by surrounding nations ; and before the Crusades were over, all the Commercial Powers on the Mediterranean were thus represented in the ports of other nations, with whom they maintained commercial relations.

Robertson has not overrated the benign effect of the Crusades upon the civilisation of Modern Europe. (Introduction to the Life of Charles V.) From their commencement we date the origin of the Modern System of Commerce. The Pisans, the Venetians, and the Genoese, were all engaged in transporting the Crusaders to Asia. They were generously paid for their services, and all those Republics received charters from the princes they served, which secured to them great privileges and immunities ; the right of forming establishments in maritime towns, as well as on the borders of rivers, and of governing themselves within their own precincts by laws and ordinances of their own creation. (Warden's quotation from Muratori's *Antiq. Ital., Medii Ævi*, t. ii., p. 906.) In this manner the Italian trade in the Levant became extended, till the commerce of the world was centred in the hands of those powerful Republics.

The gradual growth of their domestic and foreign power is one of the most curious and attractive questions of the historian. But we must omit its

consideration here, and pass over it with a general glance.

Genoa contributed more powerfully than any other Italian State to the early crusades. The Ligurian* Republic had been able to resist the rush of Barbarians from the North, and had, even in the Ninth Century, nearly destroyed the Saracen Empire in the Islands of the Mediterranean and on the African coast. More deeply fired with the spirit of maritime adventure than almost any other State in the world, she led the way in the commerce of the East, and closed her magnificent career by the discovery of the New World. Even before the time of Peter the Hermit, she had opened a flourishing commerce with Asia, and she was present at the Conquest of Antioch, and of Jerusalem. The chivalric leaders of those bold enterprises well knew how much they owed to her valor and commercial activity; and the red cross in the white field (the ensign of the Ligurian Republic) was planted on the towers of Antioch and the battlements of Jerusalem. Godfrey and Baldwin ordered the following inscription to be placed over the Holy Sepulchre: "*Stronghold of the Genoese.*" She formed treaties with the Moorish and African Princes, and gained, by diplomacy or conquest, a strong foothold in the Black sea, where she founded a powerful colony that augmented her commercial wealth incredibly.

* This name, derived from the Romans, was generally used by the Genoese till the downfall of their Republic.

Pisa and Venice were controlled by the same wakeful policy, and extended their commerce under the same auspices. They all now appointed their commercial agents throughout the East; for the exigencies of their commerce demanded the protection and surveillance of public agents in all ports visited by their vessels. These representatives were vested with great powers, and their magistracy was regarded with great respect.*

* Says Mr. Warden, "The Venetians, in a treaty with the Sultan of Aleppo, secured the privilege of establishing in that town a church, a country house, and a national magistracy. (1229.) In the charter of Guy, King of Jerusalem, power was given to the people of Accon to elect Viscounts or Consuls of their nations to take cognizance of disputes, and also of all crimes except theft, homicide, treason, forgery and rape. During the Twelfth Century the Lombards created a number of Consulates for the decision of commercial disputes, and the executions of treaties and conventions with foreigners. In the same Century, the Venetians had Consuls at Jerusalem, Aleppo, and Alexandria, whose duty it was to support the rights and privileges granted to the Republic, by the Kings of Jerusalem, the Sultans of Egypt, and the Emperors of the East. The Consuls were generally selected from the class of poor, though enlightened nobles, whom the Senate allowed to remain in office during life. The Chief Judge of commercial tribunals received the title of Consul, not from motives of vanity, as observed by a modern civilian (Brown's Elements of Civil Law), but from the importance of his office, and the royal authority by which it was bestowed. The Greek Emperors conferred on the Duke of Venice and of Naples the

The office of a Consul in those times was no inconsiderable matter. No man was thought worthy

title of *υπατος*, or Consul, and appointed agents of Athenian origin at the port of Marseilles, for the superintendence of commercial affairs.

“The Franks, who at an early period carried on an extensive commerce, had Consuls in the Levant, whose decisions were subject to the revision of a superior tribunal. Thomas, Count of Savoy, Vicar of the Emperor Frederick, granted by treaty to the Commonalty of Marseilles, the privilege of establishing Consuls at Acre, Syria, Sicily, and Pouille, who had complete jurisdiction over their countrymen (1226).

“In a treaty with the King of Tunis, the Pisans secured the right of establishing a factory and Consul in that town. The same privilege was afterwards granted to the Genoese (1230).

“James I., King of Arragon, granted by charter to the municipal magistracy of Barcelona, free powers to appoint Consuls in countries beyond the sea, in Syria and in Egypt, who took an oath of office, and were accountable to this Council; and two years after, this sovereign granted another charter to the municipal magistracy of Barcelona, by which it was authorized to name Consuls in the ports of the Archipelago, of Greece, and the Levant.

“The Hanseatic League, composed of nearly a hundred Consulates, which extended from the Baltic to the Rhine, was formed for the purpose of exchanging the productions of the North for those of the South, and protecting commerce against the piracies in the Baltic committed by the rude nations who inhabited its borders. This celebrated association had Consular establishments in Moscovy, Norway, Russia, England, and Flanders. After the fall of the last emperor of the East, Venice, in a

of so important a trust who did not perfectly understand all the great questions of commerce and diplomacy; for they were entrusted with treaties of commerce and international negotiations, and with judicial powers involving every principle of civil, common, and maritime law. They represented the governments that sent them in all their authority and dignity. They were sent to their destination in public vessels, and maintained at the public expense. They were generally prohibited from engaging in speculations in commerce and the pursuits of business, that they might devote all their time to their official duties, and be swayed by no private interests in their administration. The early Italian writers tell us that the Consular office was guarded with the utmost jealousy, and looked upon as the great support of their commerce with foreign nations.

In later periods, when the rising Powers of Europe began to offer an effectual rivalry to these maritime republics of Italy, and they exchanged ambassadors, they gave them the most imperious commands to watch over the commercial interests of their country, and concede to other princes nothing that could impair their maritime power. The indolent loungers

treaty with Mahomet II., reserved the right of keeping a *Bailo* (commercial and diplomatic agent) at Constantino-ple, for the protection of commerce and merchants. In the fifteenth century the office of Consul was sought by the first families of Genoa and 'Florence.' P. 50-69.—
WARDEN.

around the courts of princes were busy in tricks of courtiers and negotiations of marriage, but the Genoese, the Pisan, and Venetian Ambassadors were occupied in promoting the commercial power of the states which had commissioned them. And what was the consequence?

Venice, which had been founded by a few old men and women and children, who had fled to the marshes of the Adriatic to escape the rage and devastation of the northern barbarians who were sweeping over Italy, became in a few centuries the first power in Europe. Pisa, which had been obliged to struggle for many years against the most formidable obstacles that can ever impede the growth of new states, with a malaria which annually swept off a multitude of her population, soon made her name feared from the Pillars of Hercules to the shores of the Danube and the banks of the Nile, and became the commercial Lawgiver of all future ages.

Genoa, which stands at the head of the Ligurian Sea, hemmed in by almost impassable mountains,—the Appenines and Maritime Alps—which she could not cross, could not get her bread from the barren and rocky hill-sides, and she was driven out upon the Mediterranean. In the eighth century she had reached such a pitch of grandeur and power that the Pontiff of Rome appealed to her to undertake a crusade to Corsica, to hurl a blow against the dreaded power of the Saracens, who had advanced from the African coast and gained a foothold upon the conti-

ment of Europe, threatening to sweep over it with desolation. The Pontiff alleged as the reason for his demand, that Genoa was more adequate to this enterprise than any other power in Europe.—(Cafaro's *Chronicles of the Ligurian people*.)

The event justified his confidence. The little city of Genoa drove the Saracens from their hold on the continent (in the Gulf of Spezzia), to the island of Corsica—from Corsica she chased them to Sardinia—from Sardinia she forced them out upon the open sea, and at last fell upon the seat of their power in Africa, and laid their capital in the dust—seized uncounted millions of treasure, liberated all the Christian captives of all their wars, and dragged back their dreaded chief to an Italian prison, where he died in his chains.

At last, the Northern States of Europe began to feel the maritime enthusiasm of the age, and launched upon the seas for discovery and adventure. Macpherson remarks in his *Annals of Commerce* (Vol. i., p. 536, note), that the earliest notice of the office of a Consul of Merchants in any English record, is found in an application of the Consul of the Venetian merchants at Bruges and an English merchant, which induced the king to take all the merchants of Venice trading to England, Ireland, and his other dominions under his protection, during one year (1346).—(Warden, p. 71.)

I believe the earliest appointment of a Consul by England was in the year 1485, when Richard the

Third commissioned Lorenzo Strozzi, a princely merchant of Florence, to act as British Consul in Tuscany, allowing him a fourth part of one per cent on all goods exported or imported by Englishmen. — (Extract of Warden, from *Fœdera*, vol. xii., p. 261.)

From this period, English commerce rapidly extended under the vigilance of Consular agents, who were appointed in every country with whom she maintained commercial relations.

In the 17th century, the consular system of the Italian States became general throughout the civilized world. But although essential service has been derived from the system adopted by England, France, and the other great powers, yet it was without a question inferior to that of the Italian Republics. But to it, such as it has been, and still is, we must attribute no inconsiderable share of the commercial power and prosperity of all modern states.

II. THE OBJECTS CONTEMPLATED BY THE MODERN CONSULAR SYSTEM—The advancement of the prosperity and power of nations. In modern times, when commerce has become the great question of governments, and its prosperity or decline are an index of the advancement or decadence of a nation, it is surely worthy of some consideration from the government of a Republic like our own, which, to surpass the power and the civilisation of all other people, needs only to be guided by wisdom.

The Consul to a foreign nation, is sent to be the

guardian of *all* the interests of his country, and sacred is his trust. This is, or ought to be, his business. No pains should be spared, no exertion or fatigue considered, which can in any manner result in advantage to his country.

He should fully understand the structure, the history, the spirit, and the policy of the nation he represents, and the government to which he is accredited.

He should know their past commercial history and relations, the origin and progress of their commerce, and the causes of its advancement or decline.

He should make himself perfectly familiar with the agricultural, the mechanical, and the maritime power of the country to which he is sent. All its branches of industry, and all its resources of wealth. How the great system of reciprocal barter and exchange is carried on, and how it may be extended—the defects of commercial treaties, and how they may be remedied—the branches of commerce which are sustained by the essential wants and abundance of the two nations, and have therefore a basis for permanent prosperity, and those which depend only upon exaggerated and ephemeral speculation—what new articles of luxury or convenience may be exchanged—what encouragement given to new fields of industry and adventure—what new improvements in agriculture, in manufactures, in science, and in all the mechanic and liberal arts—how the ingenuity of man in one country, may administer to the economy

of life in another, and finally what fruit may be gathered by his country from the experiments of men and governments in past ages. These are the absolute and indispensable objects contemplated by the consulship. But we have thus far limited ourselves to the "bare necessities" of the office; let us go a step further.

He is the protector of his *countrymen*, as well as of their general interests. Wherever American Consuls are found, there will be found their fellow-citizens, in the pursuits of gain or intelligence or pleasure, or it may be they are cast upon his charity by adversity. It is wasting words to say that the Consul who does his duty, will protect his fellow-citizens when they appeal to him for aid in a foreign country. He will do something more if he be a man worthy of his station. He will see that they travel or live in a foreign country, with the same security and peace, and that they are treated with all that respect, and allowed to enjoy all that liberty, which the most favored of its own subjects enjoy. Owing to their ignorance of the laws, the language, and the customs of the country, mistakes may often arise which, without timely explanation or interference, may involve them in serious difficulties, expense, and dangers—or it may frequently happen that the mistakes, the venality, the insolence, or the injustice of civil officers, may expose them to a violation of those rights which are secured by international law, or the courtesy of civilized nations. If there be no

Consul on the spot, or if he be a dilatory, ignorant, selfish, or interested man, or if his influence be small with the government near which he is stationed, or if, in a word, he be disqualified, by any circumstance whatever, from exercising his Consular trusts with fidelity, wisdom, and success, it is certain his countrymen can never carry on business, or reside, or even travel though that country, with safety.

He may feel all this, and in a measure do his prescribed duty; yet his work will be poorly done, however good his intentions may be, unless he inspires respect for his Government, his countrymen and himself, in the country where he dwells.

All men, and particularly civil officers, always presume upon those for whom their superiors do not manifest respect; and the Consul whose ignorance, or ill-breeding, or immorality, or indiscretion, or dishonor, have lost for him that regard so essential to his success in all public undertakings, will find that neither the power of his Government, nor the prosperity of its commerce, nor the respectability of his fellow-citizens, can save him or them from a thousand insults and abuses they never would have presumed to practise, had he been a different man. I am quite certain the fair character and high standing of the Consul abroad, unaided by an Ambassador or Commercial Treaty, can do more for his country and its interests, than ambassadors and treaties can ever effect alone. Indeed, I am somewhat skeptical on

the point of such commercial treaties as we have generally entered into, particularly with Sweden, Denmark, and other small countries of Europe. We have given to these nations more than they have given to us in return, and more than they can give us ; and although private individuals may give without hoping for a return, yet the folly of applying this principle to the diplomacy of nations will soon be discovered, by every people that adopts it.

We have already extended this policy so far, it is no uncommon thing to see foreign vessels leaving our ports, laden with American products, while our own noble merchantmen are unrigged in the docks ; and our carrying trade is almost cut off in some parts of the world. What had we to gain by a treaty of commerce with Sweden ? We opened our hundred ports to her vessels, and created a formidable maritime rival in all foreign ports frequented by our vessels, and even brought them into our very bosom. They build vessels with pine, without copper, and, comparatively, without expense ; pay their seamen poorly, and make them eat worse. Her population, driven away by the rigor of their polar winters, come forward by thousands to crowd their vessels ; and when they offer to carry a bale of cotton from New Orleans to Genoa for two dollars, it is not very likely the American vessel will be able to get a freight. Twenty years ago, we had forty vessels a year trading with the port of Leghorn ; now we have seventeen ; and, although it has passed into

the hands of foreigners, yet our commerce with Tuscany is increasing. But fifteen Swedish vessels enter and leave that port every twelve months, for the United States, or South America, and a score of other nations. I might enlarge on this point, but it is a matter too well known to require elucidation. To continue the point we were contemplating—

A good Consul, on the spot, is worth to the commerce of a country, more than all the treaties in the world. His vigilance is constant, his care unwearied; and by fidelity and wise management he may win from even half-civilized Governments, by private influence, what would never have been conceded by treaty. Machiavelli declared: “*Il vero Ambasciatore è il Console*” (the Consul is the real Ambassador). Unless the Consul, by a fixed residence in a foreign country, comes to understand its real policy and interests better than the newly appointed Minister can understand them, he has failed in his duty. Almost any difficulty that finally ruptures the peace of nations, begins in some commercial question under the immediate province of the Consul. This is particularly true in our times, when, in the language of Thomas Carlyle, *Commerce is King*. “I fear no war,” said M. Guizot, some months ago, “except one that may grow out of commerce.” England and France adjusted, peaceably, the Tahiti and Morocco affairs, which, less than twenty-five years ago, would have kindled a flame that would have set the world in a blaze. Why? “We have

come to the sensible conclusion," says a London ministerial Journal, "that a little spurious honor is worth less than a good many thousand bales of cotton." "*Parbleu !*" says a French Gazette; "do you think you can stuff it down our throats, as the Rouen *Fabricants* do *la gazeuse* ? that *le Consul Pritchard*, if we had him, would be worth a cargo of Lyons silk!"

There is more in all this, than words. The Times and Le Journal des Debats speak out the voice of universal civilisation. Nations will hereafter fight for *the Commerce King*, and not for the whim of a corsetted, perfumed Louis Quatorze. As long ago as Cardinal Mazarin's time, that wonderfully clear-sighted statesman declared that no man could be a complete Ambassador, or Minister of a Cabinet, who has not been a good Consul.

Who were Napoleon's Consuls? One of them told me, that when the Great Captain was in the height of his power, he applied to him for a Consulship.

"What do you know about the duty of a Consul?" asked Napoleon.

"I know he can do more for the real good of his country, than the Ambassador," was the young man's bold reply.

"Eh! bien," said Napoleon, "you know your duty, let us see if you will do it. Take the office, and ten thousand francs extra pay the first year."

The same man afterwards told General Bertrand, that Napoleon ought not to undertake the expedition

against Russia, alleging his reasons. Napoleon heard he had said so. "I'll show him he is mistaken," said Napoleon. We all know the result. While Napoleon was at Elba, this Consul visited the Emperor at his request. "You," said he, as he took his hand kindly, "would have been too good a counsellor for me. My evil destiny made you Consul, when I should have made you my *bonne genie*." Having thus glanced at the origin and design of the Consular System—

II. LET US BRIEFLY CONTEMPLATE OUR PRESENT CONSULAR SYSTEM—if, indeed, that be worthy of the name which we seem to have been determined thus to designate. In a word, then, the American Consul is often a foreigner, who knows little, and cares less about the country he represents ; almost always a merchant, actively engaged in trade and speculations, which totally unfit him for the Consular office ; never paid by his Government, and yet expected to maintain with dignity, an office which is to him only a heavy bill of expense ; his Consulate is unfurnished with Books, Laws, or authorities to guide him in his official conduct, and yet every mistake rendering him liable to the displeasure of his Government ;—his office, in a word, has all the responsibilities of the highest trust, without any portion of the honors, or advantages, or emoluments which, in any other nation, have always been regarded as essential to such stations.

And yet his Government expects from him all that

attention to its interests he is capable of bestowing, whatever may be his occupations; and his fellow-citizens consider him the property of the Commonwealth, to be disposed of as their wants, pleasures, or caprices may dictate. A large number of his countrymen seem to think they may command the attentions of the Consul, as freely as the couriers who attend them in their travels; that the simple fact of his holding an office under the Government lays him under such an obligation. I believe it is almost universally supposed that an American may make a Consul the agent of his correspondence and communications, without giving notice or receiving permission. Consuls are thus not unfrequently burdened with perplexing commissions, purely of a private nature, which the traveller should by all means have committed to his agent, banker, or merchant; for they are always attended with more or less expense, and often no little disturbance. In many instances Consuls are subjected to expense on the receiving and franking of letters and parcels for their countrymen, greater than all their Consular fees. And yet much of this is for people they never saw, and who either have no disposition, or no means of reimbursing such sums. I have even known persons who had been troubling a Consul in this manner for several months, object to pay him his legal fees for a passport, and attempt to evade it. Now, far be it from me to suppose the nature of the Consular office and the laws of courtesy do not require of the Con-

sul every service to his countrymen it may be in his power to render; but I can conceive of no *claim* his fellow-citizens can have upon him, except for his official services.

I allow, however, that a Consular System might and should be established, expressly for the advantage of American citizens abroad, and upon a basis which would give them a right to claim from all their Consuls, all their attention and all the hospitality in their power to bestow. For this reason I attach far less blame to those Americans abroad, who unconsciously increase the burdens of the Consul, than to our Government who have provided no remedy; for I have not seen one of my countrymen in Europe who did not feel that the Government was deeply to blame for these very evils. They know why a Consul should be sent abroad, and they suppose he is paid or maintained at his post for this purpose, till they discover their mistake.

Says an American Consul who writes me on this subject: "The Consul is not only expected to find out his countryman is in town, but call at his hotel, invite him to dinner, sending a carriage—get him (in Italy) a box at the opera, free of expense, of course—spin street yarn with him for a day or more, as it may be, showing him the Lions of the city, with just as much *gusto* as though he had not already seen them a thousand times, and be his humble servant for a week or ten days, taking drives out into the country, &c., &c.; and when he comes to go

away, he is expected to *visè* his passport *gratis*, and even send it to his lodging. If he charge his \$2—‘why ! that man must be turned out.’

“The master of a vessel expects to call on his Consul, get legal advice, commercial information, defences before Tribunals of Commerce, and help in all his difficulties. He stays three weeks, and when he goes away, leaves two or three destitute seamen on the Consul’s hands, whom he is bound by law of Congress to support. The Government requires him to aid those men, and often refuses to pay him his disbursements in doing it. Finally, when the Captain comes to weigh anchor, he goes up to the Consulate and refuses to pay anything more than ‘\$4—for receiving and delivering his papers,’ and he thinks even this an unreasonable charge. He’s a hopeful subject you say. Yes, but a subject too often met with. * * * Well, next the Government, once in a few months, comes out with a circular (which would be unnecessary if our Consular System was properly constructed, and Consuls did their duty), calling for particular and minute information in regard to the productions and condition of the country, its foreign commerce and domestic manufactures, prices of labor in every department of industry, exports, imports, &c., &c. The next day he receives a letter from the 4th Auditor of the Treasury, informing him that his draft (sent with proper vouchers) for \$125 53½cts., being sums disbursed for destitute and distressed seamen during the last

year or six months, as the case may be, is *protested*. ‘You are authorized by law to expend only 20 cents per day, Federal money, for distressed seamen.’ A seaman is discharged from a vessel sick; he goes to a hospital—is destitute and naked—he must have clothes, and food, and lodging—he wants some little comforts—and yet 20 cents *per diem* is the allowance for this! And the Government have been known to protest Consuls’ drafts even for 20 cents per diem, Federal money, for shipwrecked seamen taken off the shoals and reefs by fishermen, and the Consul recalled for—God knows what—and to cap the climax, a foreigner, who could not speak a word of English, appointed in his place.”

My correspondent may be guilty of a shade of extravagance—but so far as my observation goes, this is pretty nearly what Cotton Mather calls the “living royal truth.” There are many exceptions, and even all such cases as these are but exceptions; for I can say for myself, that, from the great proportion of my countrymen I have seen abroad, I have experienced a degree of delicacy and good breeding which left upon my mind a sentiment of the highest respect; and I have been proud of more than one captain of a merchantman as one of my guests, when I numbered among them men who bore titles and orders of nobility. They were well-bred, good-mannered, and intelligent men. Such qualities (Americans profess at home) ought to entitle a man to admission

to any circle—why not carry out this principle abroad, and be Americans still?

Sometimes the Government, through the influence of a powerful friend, make a Consul a *Chargé d’Affaires*, after he has served several years faithfully in his office. This is almost invariably the policy of other Governments, who seem to understand their own interests a good deal better in such respects than ourselves. But more commonly, after the Consul has gone to all the expense of establishing himself in a foreign country, and has just commenced a successful business, some broken-down merchant goes to Washington, and the Consul is told he is no longer Consul—Postage on the valuable document unpaid. I might mention quite a large number of instances of this kind under Mr. Tyler, which would excite universal indignation among our people.

Now let me ask any reasonable man what sort of a Consular System are we likely to have under these circumstances. He will answer without a moment’s hesitation—“the very worst in the world,” and facts bear him out in his answer. It is quite certain there are not ten American Consulates in the world that will maintain a Consul even with the greatest economy; and the great proportion of them do not even pay their own expenses. Their total receipts will not defray the expense of office, rent, and stationery—we say nothing of a Secretary, and the incidental expenses of the Consulate. The evils that

naturally flow from such a system are more numerous and more serious than any man supposes, who has not been either a Consul or the Master of a merchantman.

1. The office of a Consul is generally held by American *merchants* or *foreigners*; for, with few exceptions, no American who is qualified for such a station, will ask for, or accept an office which is only a bill of expense, except with a view of making his official standing contribute to his own speculations. There are many ports where an American business cannot be supported, and, in such cases, those Consulates are filled by foreigners.

Some Consuls go abroad with exaggerated ideas of the emoluments of the office, and finding out their mistake, leave very soon. Those whose private fortunes are adequate to their support, will not confine themselves for any length of time to the drudgery of a Consulship, and they who are so rich as not to care for the fees, are rich enough to travel, and they throw up their commissions. Some Consuls who supposed their offices would at least with strict economy maintain them, and perhaps spent their all in getting to their station, are sometimes too poor even to go home—like some of Carlyle's Chartists, "*too lean to rebel*," and they stay and get all they can out of their office,—exceed their lawful fees, and this they must do or starve—nor are they the only men "the State makes dishonest." Endless disputes and difficulties between masters, commercial houses,

and the Consul arise. The Consul is complained of, and perhaps turned out. It may be he deserved it; he did most certainly, if he violated the law; and yet that same man may be much purer and better than the law itself. This poor Consul is the slave of an unjust and unwise system.

Edward Livingston in 1833, while Secretary of State, called the attention of Congress to a Reform in our Consular System in an able Report, which, after all, seems to have had very little effect. He prepared this report at the request of Gen. Jackson, and the President recommended it warmly for adoption, and the most distinguished Senators and Representatives gave it their support. But even this all-powerful influence was of no avail. No particular opposition was made to the progress of the Bill in either House, and I can attribute its failure only to the insensibility of Congress. Says Mr. Livingston—

“In many, perhaps in the greater number of cases, the office is sought for, chiefly, for the advantages and the influence it will give to extend the commercial affairs of the officer. Can it be believed this influence will always be properly exercised? When it is, will not contrary suspicions be entertained? This must create jealousy, detraction, and all the art that rivalry will exercise and provoke, amidst which the dignity of the public officer is degraded, and his influence with the foreign functionary lost.”

There is more truth in these words of that clear-minded Statesman than appears on their surface. It is almost certain a merchant cannot make a good Consul. He may perform with the utmost fidelity all the details of his official functions—he may be, as most of our American merchants are, a man of high and pure honor, and unspotted integrity—all pecuniary interests committed to him may be safe—and he may watch with great vigilance over the interests of the commerce of his country—concede all you will, and we have such Consuls—it is still true, his private pursuits will unfit him for a noble and independent representation of his country and its interests.

His time is and must be devoted principally to his own affairs, and it must be a very obscure and a very insignificant Consulate which does not demand that very same time for official duty. True, a ship's papers may be signed and delivered, and a vessel sent to sea in an hour—a passport may receive its *visè* and be registered in five minutes. But writing his name, and affixing the Consular Seal, are a pretty small part of a Consul's duty.

If he cherish the views and feelings we have before mentioned, of his country and his office, he will find it is enough to be a Consul, without spending eight or ten hours a day in his counting-room. But there is no little danger that in spite of himself, his own interests, or prejudices, or relations, will sway his judgment more or less in all his official conduct.

A ship enters the port with a cargo of—no matter what. His own interests are to be seriously affected by the sale or consignment of that cargo. It must be so if he be a merchant, for commerce is a system of competition between man and man. Is it likely he will give the captain such information or advice as will most directly prejudice his own interests? For the information the Captain wants is just the information the Consul will sacrifice his own interests by communicating.* The Captain has a diffi-

* A single fact will make the case clear :

In 1842 or '43 (I am not certain which), an American merchantman arrived at a port in the Mediterranean with a valuable cargo, which the Captain was authorized to consign to any house he might select. He addressed himself to the Consul, from whom he had reason (as his constituted adviser), to expect safe and disinterested counsel. The Consul requested him to go on making the necessary arrangements for discharging his cargo, and call the following day. In the meantime the Consul laid a scheme by which he should receive no little profit, although, with an appearance of disinterestedness, the cargo was to be consigned to another man. The Captain had never been in the port before, could not speak a word of the language, was ignorant of the customs of the place, and the state of the market, which put it out of his power to get the necessary information to guide him in transacting the business for himself. The cargo was just the one which at that moment, if properly sold, would have given the largest profit to the owners. Intelligence had been privately received by the Consul the day before, which made his profit large and sure upon his own merchandise and that of the Captain. This intelligence, however

culty with a merchant, and the case is carried to an arbitration or a judicial tribunal. Is it likely the Consul will give any advice or take any measures calculated to injure the interests or excite the animosity of the merchants, or the local authorities where he resides? His success in business is in a great degree dependent upon the good will of these very same authorities and individuals. It is perfectly certain, too, that sooner or later disputes and difficulties will arise, where he will fail in his official duty, or take part with the Captain at the expense of his own personal popularity and influence. And how is he to act when he, as consignee, has a difficulty with his Captain? Has he two identities—a Consular and a Mercantile one? No! The Judge, the Jury, the Counsel, the Witness, the Merchant, and the Consul, sit in the same chair! He can administer the oath to himself—examine and cross-examine himself—Why! the idea is enough to disturb the gravity of an Esquimaux Indian!

he did not communicate to the Captain, and his cargo went for the price which then ruled in the market! This intelligence it was the duty of the Consul to communicate to the Captain, and he would have done it, without doubt, had he been disinterested! He kept his own counsel, and made over ten thousand dollars by the speculation!

This is only one of many similar cases which have come to my knowledge. Such abuses are the legitimate fruit of our present system, and they will continue while the system lasts.

But what security is there that the Merchant-Consul is to be so pure, high-minded, and honorable a man? There are such I know, and I well know, too, they are few. More than one Consul has been appointed who had become a bankrupt for a large amount at home, and left no very dubious character as a sinking-fund for his creditors. They hope in a foreign country to begin anew to court fortune—finally get consignments, and at last become rich. Some do.—I might state facts that have fallen under my observation, bearing on this point, but my motives would not be understood. I might call some Consuls by name, who are merchants, and who are among the very best Consuls we have. But the odds on the other side are fearful. It is more commonly the case that the Merchant-Consul utterly neglects his official duty to attend to his own affairs, and he finds a pretty good excuse in the fact that the government has conferred upon him no obligation, and can therefore look for no particular exertion, or expenditure of time or money in return.

But it is perfectly certain the Merchant-Consul will invariably have little influence with the government to which he is accredited. By entering into business he voluntarily gives up the station he might otherwise occupy, other things being equal. Commerce is more than respectable, I well know; it is everywhere honorable; but in nearly all countries, although the merchant, as a merchant, may be often received in polite society, yet he does not expect to

move in so select a circle as an official character. The Merchant-Consul will find that he lowers his standing by entering actively into business, and this will appear wherever the experiment is made. Why not allow ministers and *Chargés d' Affaires* to carry on business? An Ambassador could undoubtedly make money sailing ships, and a very insignificant *Chargé* might keep a very good shop of Yankee notions, which would most likely sell very well. But he would, at least, seem to be a very odd *Chargé*. Not unlikely his customers might indulge a smile at his expense, when he rode by in his lace, chapeau and sword, going to Court. And yet it is honorable to buy and sell goods. Oh yes! Commerce is the great humaniser of mankind,"—"the agent of Civilisation." Yes, all that—"but one thing at a time, if ye care for having things well done." "A Consul is not clothed with diplomatic powers,"—Generally he is not (our Consuls I refer to), but his office partakes more or less of the diplomatic character, and he is often called on to conduct the most important international affairs. His relative position to the *Chargé d' Affaires* is the same the latter bears to the Ambassador; and frequently the Consulate is vastly more important than the Legation.

The Consul may be, and often is, called on by the ministry of the Government, for information, for correspondence, for an audience with a sovereign—he not unfrequently presents Commodores and Commanders of national vessels to Governors, Admirals,

Princes, and Kings, and is often obliged to conduct some of the most difficult and delicate matters that arise between functionaries of governments. In all such cases, the difference between the Consul who maintains his station with dignity, and is known to be a man of letters and polite education, and the common Consul-Merchant, will be found to be just great enough, to secure for one all the respect paid to a diplomatist, and the other all the attention a business man receives from the courtier. Although the former makes no more pretensions, yet he is *à priori* considered to be a man of more elevated and liberal views, more polite education, more finished address, and more rich and extended learning.

In all European countries, where wide distinctions of rank exist, and where merchants are not admitted to the first class, the Consul, who would otherwise naturally be found there, voluntarily cuts himself off from all such associations, by assuming the garb of an inferior class. The effect of it all will appear when an important crisis arrives, and great interests are committed to his hands. I need not enlarge here—every intelligent man understands this. Nor need I disclaim any fondness for European aristocracies, with its stupidity, its vulgarity, and its vice. I have too long been committed to other principles to be misunderstood. The whole thing is said in two words. The Merchant-Consul will be treated by everybody, from the King to the boatman, as a merchant, in all his applications, relations, and inter-

course—the Consul, in the high sense of that term, will be treated as the representative of his country, whose lofty province it is, to watch over the interests of a great and respectable people.

Let us look at the policy adopted by other nations. None of the great powers, and only a few of the smaller ones, suffer their Consuls to have anything to do with commercial speculations. They know the myriad evils that flow from a system we cling to so tenaciously, and they are careful to avoid them. They universally pay their Consuls salaries adequate to their support, and, in most instances, better than our *Chargés d’Affaires*. The fees of their offices generally go to the Government, and all causes of dispute and difficulty on this subject are removed. The title of their Representatives is that of Consul-General, which gives them a higher grade than our own. A generous provision is made for the support of an efficient and respectable Chancery, a Vice-Consul, a Secretary, &c. A Consulate composed of a commodious suite of rooms, well furnished—a Library made up of all the valuable works on Law, Commerce, and Diplomacy.

Under such a system, the office of a Consul becomes a desirable one, and is sought for by able and well educated, cultivated, and experienced men. Their Consuls make their pursuit a business—a profession. Before they are promoted to a Consul-Generalship, they must have served the requisite period in the lower grades, and become familiar with

their duty. There is nothing less than an Ambassadorship for the foreign Vice-Consul to aspire to, and he is sure one day to come to the honor, if he display the requisite ability. It is regarded as the legitimate termination of the Consular and diplomatic career. Many of the ablest Ambassadors and Cabinet Ministers of Modern Europe, began their career as Vice-Consuls. They are never appointed without some qualification, and they are never recalled unless guilty of mal-administration, although they are shifted occasionally from place to place, for wise purposes. When they retire from their official career, they enjoy a generous pension, proportionate to the length and the character of their services.

They are endowed with all necessary powers for an efficient execution of justice between their countrymen, and there is no appeal from their decision except to the supreme tribunals of their country.

In fine, theirs is a profession filled with honor, and attended by a generous reward, which enables them to maintain a dignity corresponding with the rank of their country, and extend that hospitality to their countrymen which makes their houses the resort of enlightened and educated men.

The consequences that flow from such a system are natural. Foreign nations are represented with greater ability and dignity than ourselves. Their Consuls are treated with more honor, and their fellow-countrymen with more respect. Their Governments receive privileges, and concessions, and favors

which are utterly denied to our own. While they are represented by a class of men who command great respect for the Governments that send them, we are frequently so represented foreign Governments cannot feel much respect for us or our Institutions. They know the embarrassments of our System of foreign representation, and they know too how easily they might be obviated. They perceive that our Government bestows not a thought on the subject—they conclude that the system is a fair representation of our country, and how can they avoid coming to a conclusion exceedingly unfavorable to our reputation?

A better illustration perhaps could not be had of the superiority of other nations over us in this respect, than is found in Italy. For example—no place in Europe, of the same size, has so splendid a Consular representation as Genoa. The Consuls of most of the Great Powers, and many of the smaller States, are noblemen—some of them have been *Chargés d’Affaires* and Secretaries of Legation, at the first courts of Europe. Their salaries, with the perquisites of their offices, varying from \$5,000 to \$20,000 *per annum*. Many of these Consuls would in America be esteemed fit for foreign Embassies, and they would honor any country in the highest stations. They are prohibited from engaging in commerce—all their time is devoted to the duties of their office, to literature, and to society. They often pass whole months without seeing a vessel of their own flag. Indeed, in some instances, no direct

commerce at all is carried on between Genoa and the States they represent. And yet those nations esteem it essential to their true interests to maintain in such places a highly respectable Representative, and men are appointed who reflect great credit upon their country.

Few nations have more commerce with Genoa than our own, and yet the fees of this Consulate will not defray the expense of a Secretary, and the hire of an office! Is it any wonder, that up to 1842, during the short period of four years, the Consulate passed through *five* different hands—three of whom were foreigners.

2. Another great evil, is the appointment of foreigners to the Consular office. In a great number of instances, I am aware, none but foreigners could be found to accept such posts. They are not desirable places of residence—there is no motive for an American to go there, unless it may be for commercial pursuits, and the consequence is, that the office is filled either by a merchant or foreigner. It is certainly a beggarly business, for a great and powerful Republic to degrade itself so far, as to ask a foreigner to be generous enough to pay out of his own pocket, the expense of maintaining a representative of her Government abroad, expressly for the benefit of her own citizens—when those very citizens would not accept such a post themselves. Gen. Jackson introduced a reform in this matter—Mr. Van Buren prosecuted it—Mr. Tyler did more perhaps than any—

and Mr. Polk certainly more than all our former Presidents. But still a large number of our Consuls are foreigners. I do think it requires no argument to prove that no foreigner, under any circumstances, should ever hold office under our Government. By foreigner, I mean, of course, a man who owes allegiance to a foreign power.* Set a wolf to watch the

* For several years, the Consulate of Trieste has been held by an Englishman, by the name of Moore; and as he has been recently removed, and with very great propriety, I feel no delicacy in calling his name and stating a fact. While the M'Leod case was pending in this country, and a rupture with Great Britain seemed likely to take place, the Governor of Malta despatched a fleet of steamers to the Straits of Gibraltar to intercept all our merchant vessels, as soon as the Governor of Gibraltar received an intimation of the hostile intentions of Great Britain. At this time there were a large number of our merchantmen in the Mediterranean, and several at Trieste.

Mr. Andrews, our Consul at Malta, immediately sent despatches to all his Colleagues in that Sea, communicating this important information that all American vessels might have warning, and remain in the ports of friendly powers. Mr. Andrews had often enough before had occasion to know, that no dependence could be placed upon the Consul at Trieste, and he sent a despatch to Mr. Perdicaris, Consul at Athens, requesting him to embrace the earliest opportunity of getting intelligence to our merchantmen in the port of Trieste; and assigned as a reason for adopting this course, that Mr. Moore, being an Englishman, no dependence could be placed upon him in such a case. To show how well grounded was this conviction, Mr. Moore was heard by several Americans (I

fold—but in God's name, don't commit Republicanism to the keeping of foreigners, and last of all, to an Englishman. One would suppose that the experience of our Government and our commercial men, during the last war with Great Britain, would have settled the point. I received a letter from an American Consul (a foreigner), not long ago, addressed "To his Lordship the American Consul, General of the United States, and its Dependencies." This is a fair sample of the intelligence of foreigners generally, in our institutions and affairs. I would even hesitate about the appointment of any man, to a foreign office, who was not a native-born citizen of the United States. I consider it one of those privileges which even intelligent and just-minded foreigners are not inclined to ask. The foreigner has certainly little to complain of in regard to his liberty or his

was informed) to say, that "Mr. Andrews did perfectly right; for he must have been a great fool to suppose I should do anything that would have a direct tendency to injure my country. The Americans appoint me Consul to do Consular business in time of peace; but when war comes, that is quite another matter." So it appears! Our Government must be already informed of the fact, that every Englishman who holds office under another Power, knows he will be well paid for any service he renders his own Sovereign. And, although I am aware this is tantamount to saying that such men are spies, yet I fully believe it to be true. Thanks to the policy of the present Administration, such men are fast giving place to our own Americans.

privileges, in our country. I have often heard them express the opinion that they have never seen a native of a foreign country, whom they thought as well qualified to hold such a post under our Government, as a Native American of the same acquirements. Sooner or later, questions will come before the Consul, whose decision might perplex even an American civilian. And I do not conceive there is any great probability, that a man who has been born and educated under totally different institutions, and spent most of his life in foreign countries, is likely to possess that knowledge of our Laws, and Constitution, and Commerce, which will qualify him to be the guardian and the magistrate of our country.

I am equally well persuaded that a mere commercial education, however enlightened or full of experience, can never qualify a man for the able discharge of Consular functions. All this is necessary, absolutely so, but without a thorough knowledge of, at least, the established principles of Common Law, I do not understand how the Consul is to discharge his duty in any involved or difficult question. If he *must* dispense with commercial or legal knowledge, let him give up the latter, by all means; for his higher and more responsible province lies in the application of the principles of law and of equity in his official conduct. But he should be wanting in neither of these two great branches of knowledge. He should be familiar with the Law of Nations and the art of Diplomacy. For every occurrence

that brings him or his countrymen into collision with other nations, or with the officers of state, involves some one or more great principle or precedent, now regarded as one of the established maxims of International Law, or courtesy. And if, in this light, the policy of appointing American merchants to such offices is exploded, it will be likely to apply with at least the same force, to a native of a foreign country.

I would not wish to be misunderstood on this point. There are men who form exceptions to these general rules. Many merchants, particularly American, are educated men, well read in law and diplomacy. But such men can find a better occupation than that of an American Consul. I know more than one man, born in a foreign country, who would be esteemed better qualified for almost any office of trust under our Government than the great majority of our own citizens. But these are only exceptions, and do not affect the general rule, that no merchant or foreigner should be appointed to a Consulship. Who ever heard of Great Britain asking a foreigner to hold an office for her? John Bull ask another dog to watch his fold? Not he! This is one of the good things in the exclusiveness and pride of England. This is the spirit that has borne her to the top of the world. And what is her policy?

In the most distant port of the most barbarous nation, where no American would accept a Consulship,—thereby excluding himself from Christendom,

from enlightened society, and the charities of home,—the English send an intelligent, educated, experienced man, and maintain him with dignity. His business is to serve his country; he is sent to his post for that purpose; he is well paid for doing it; and his work is well done. This is one of the principal reasons why that tremendous Power is so universally dreaded. She is everywhere present, and no man or nation can tread upon the folds of her mantle, without finding time to weep over his folly. A Mr. Pritchard, an obscure individual who holds a Consulship at Tahiti, can treat a gallant French Admiral with insolence, and bring an insulted and injured Queen to his feet, and Parliament make a great noise about it; all the world is likely to get into a flame; and at last, to cap the absurdity of the claims of the British Government and add insult to injury, the French Admiral, who deserved to be blamed only, for not having rebuked the insolence of Mr. Pritchard, effectually, on the spot, is disgraced. France, I am aware, happened to have raised a delicate question just about that time, off the coast of Morocco; and, rather than have England interfere in the matter, she gave up her Admiral Du Petit Thouars, as a peace-offering to Mr. Pritchard's friends.

The course of England on this as well as some other matters reminds me of the young bully in a school I once attended. He was, beyond a question, the most pugnacious little scoundrel that ever was

born, and loved a fight a good deal better than his dinner, although it was notorious that he could eat his weight in an incredibly short space of time. But he was eternally prating about peace, and seemed to have a decided objection against all fighting, unless he got it up himself. He was politic withal, and a surer symptom of a recent outrage on his part was not needed, than when he went heavily complaining to the Professor, of the aggression of some of his companions. More than once I've seen him lay a boy sprawling upon the ground, and rush to the master to enter his complaint and demand satisfaction.

"Satisfaction, sir," said the old Professor, who at last opened his eyes, "Satisfaction, you little whelp—I'll give it to you; for I find that just in proportion as you grumble about others do you deserve the birch." The old master was right, and the birch at last wrought an effectual cure.

But this policy has thus far been practised with greater impunity by Great Britain. Very well, John Bull! I like you for it. Your pride sticks to you like life to the adder's tail, and it will make you glorious, like old Rome, even in your decay. It has made you what you are. It makes you very disagreeable, it must be confessed on all hands, but it does make you very great.

3. The duties, the rights, the powers, and the responsibilities of our Consuls are not fully or clearly defined. Consuls, when they receive their commis-

sions, are furnished with a small Tract called "Instructions to Consuls," but no Consul can gain any light from those meagre instructions on any point of doubt or difficulty, and such points are continually arising. What is he to do in such cases? The Consul looks through his archives to find light: for nothing is more natural than that provision should be made for every chancery of the government, of all those aids and authorities that may be needed in discharging official duties. But he looks in vain. He cannot find a copy of the Treaty of Commerce in force between his government and the one to which he is accredited—he cannot find the Laws of his country—not even the Constitution of the United States! What is to be done? He is perplexed and disturbed, and he does as well as he can—sometimes he is right—just as likely, however, to be wrong.

"But who shall blame him?" said Mr. Livingston; "No man can be expected to make brick without straw. We offer the Consul no facilities for the high discharge of his duty, and unless a mal-disposition appears in the officer, we must not rebuke him for doing as well as he could."

This is a frank confession, and our successive administrations have felt themselves obliged to overlook many mistakes of our Consuls, and some of them of a serious nature, which they never would have pardoned in other officers of the government. These Consular Instructions are not only deficient in mi-

nuteness, but they are not even clear as far as they go. One clause, for instance, prohibits the Consul from charging a fee on passports, but before the period closes the sentence, a *salvo* is introduced which renders this prohibition null and void ; for it is added —“ This, however, is not intended to prohibit the taking of the lawful fee, in such cases where it is necessary to establish the identity of the person.” This looks very much like a distinction without a difference ; for what is a passport, or a *visè* of a passport, but a certificate to establish the identity of the bearer with the person nominated in the passport ? And although it has been repeatedly decided by the Executive that Consuls may charge for passports, and the custom is almost universal, yet many Consuls have had scruples on the subject, and never demanded their fee. I know not whether that clause is *law*, or whether it emanated from the Department of State ; in either case it is equally binding upon Consuls. But if it was intended to reduce the Consular fees, it was unworthy of the government —if not, it is a *nullity* that might provoke a smile at the expense of the authority that perpetrated it.

Again : these Instructions inform the Consul that he has no judicial power or authority. If this be strictly true, the Consul has no authority of any kind. His decisions are binding upon no one : the Alpha and Omega of his office and dignity is that of a *Counsellor*, who can give advice, but never exercise authority. Let us cite a case. A brutal fight takes

place on board an American vessel in the port of Genoa. A violent, bloody seaman falls upon a quiet, inoffensive companion, bites off a lip and two ears, and nearly kills him. The laws of Sardinia do not interfere, if there be an American Consul in the port. The crime has taken place (at least this point is conceded by courtesy, if not by right) on the high seas, and does not fall under the jurisdiction of the local authorities. The Captain appeals to the Consul: "I can't have this man on board my ship, sir. He has nearly killed one man, and wounded others, and he says he will take the life of any one who offers him any resistance. Here I am in a foreign port; the laws require me to appeal to my Consul in such cases, and I wish you to notice the case."

What is the Consul to do? He has no judicial power! Not even the authority of a common Justice of the Peace! Human life may be sacrificed—violence perpetrated—and yet, on a strict interpretation of the "Instructions," the Consul has no authority to interpose exemplary advice. These same instructions declare that an American seaman cannot be imprisoned in a foreign port! And yet they are imprisoned every day, and will be as long as there are men among them who deserve it. The Consul must either put a liberal construction upon all such clauses, or throw up his commission, or else adopt the only safe course, and the one recommended to me by a very distinguished judge of our country. "Exercise, with discretion, just as much authority as

is necessary to secure justice between man and man ; and the higher Courts will bear you out in it, whatever may be the decisions of the Department of State.”

What is to be done in the following case ? A captain of a merchant vessel—such cases sometimes occur to my own knowledge—attempts to leave a foreign port without paying his honest debts, or even his port charges ! No Consul who has firmness, and a sense of justice, and a proper regard to the reputation of his country, will allow that master to go, until he has fulfilled his obligations—particularly as he is himself, in some instances, responsible for the payment of the port charges, and must pay them if the captain does not. Who would pretend to say there is any justice or law either, in a Consul’s tacitly consenting to such a base and dishonest proceeding ?

In the year 184— a master of a merchant vessel made such an attempt. He knocked an honest tradesman over the side of his vessel, for going on board to demand the payment of a just bill. He sent up to the Consulate and requested his papers, saying he would pay the Consular bill and port charges at his consignee’s. I complied with his request. When the Secretary laid his papers down in the counting-room of the merchant, the captain seized them up, hurried down to his ship and attempted to escape. What was to be done ? Why, every just man on earth will say he ought to be stopped. I did stop

him, and I had to do it by force. I do not know whether I kept myself "in the limits of the Law," and, I must confess, it was a matter upon which I bestowed little solicitude. He was doing wrong—violating every principle of justice and of law. I happened to be the only person who could stop him, and I exercised just authority enough to do it. I afterwards learned that this same man had attempted the same thing in several other foreign ports, and succeeded.

This is only a single case. I might state several more that have fallen under my own observation, and still more that have been related to me by my colleagues. Cases are every day arising of disputes and difficulties, and violences between seamen and officers and masters of our merchant vessels, where the greatest degree of injustice is sure to prevail towards some of the parties, without the interposition of the Consul. And yet this cannot be done without the exercise of authority; and although the law declares such authority is not vested in a Consul, yet the Supreme Court has confirmed many such decisions, and the Government itself has practically acknowledged the justice of such proceedings.

But still a great number of questions in regard to Consuls has never been contemplated by our law, or definitely decided by our courts. As often as these questions arise, the same doubts are to be solved, and the same difficulties overcome by each Consul for himself; and disputes, and insults, and injustice,

and injuries grow out of these sources of confusion, which clothe the administration of a Consularship with the most serious embarrassments, and utterly destroy its efficacy. Indeed, our Consular System is not a system. Each Consul is obliged to make a system for himself;—and its wisdom, its justice, and its efficacy must depend upon the intelligence, the firmness and the integrity of the Consul.

I have been obliged to content myself with a few illustrations only, on these points; but they will serve my purpose, if I succeed in showing the practical operation of the wretched system which we have so long tried to establish for the protection of our commerce, and the administration of justice among sea-faring men, and our citizens abroad.

I will close this point by three remarks to which I think no exception will be taken. First, there is not an American merchant, nor an American master, or an American seaman, who is not disgusted with the wretched system, and who would not rejoice in a change. Second, there is not an American Consul who will not join with them. Third, our commerce is laboring under embarrassments which can never be removed, until we have organized an efficient and well-regulated Consular Establishment.

But while there is not, probably, a sane man in the world in favor of the present arrangement; yet, I fear, the time has not yet come for the adoption of a system worthy of the age, and of our country. The horrible frauds of the present system are not yet

fully understood; its deadly effect upon our commerce is not yet sufficiently known, and felt among the people, to have any substitute provided adequate to our wants; for I have no belief that Congress will ever work a reform until they are pressed up to by the people. It is a curious and lamentable fact, that successive Congresses have treated the known will of the people with very little regard. Witness the Postage Reform. If it had been put to vote, three quarters of the American people would have voted for it ten years ago. And I believe Congress at last came up to the measure by dint of *dragooning*. It is my earnest desire that the matter may not be touched till Congress is ready to organize a noble system. For it is yet to be hoped, that we shall one day construct a Consular Code, as much superior to that of any other nation, as we have surpassed them in our Political Constitution. Better, therefore, make no movement at all, till we are ready to advance at once to the highest point we are one day so certain to attain. A partial reform may bring partial relief; but it often arrests the progress of popular opinion, which would soon have advanced to a standard that nothing could satisfy but a complete and perfect reform. Nor is there any occasion for great regret, that our reforms are retarded till they are clamored for by popular sentiment. For when our National Legislature feel the power of democratic feeling, they are sure to act; and when they know that the masses are looking for a bold, decisive

and final movement, and will be satisfied with nothing else, legislation corresponds with the exigencies of the times. We have many illustrations of this, in our history.

A partial observer might have been deluded into a belief, that a few Revolutionary Leaders gave birth to that great movement which finally broke the rod of the British Empire in the New World. But a more careful survey of the history of those times would convince the student, that the great men who figured in the cabinet or on the field, were thrown up by the deep agitations of the people from their own bosom. It is only when a revolution is begun and acknowledged under such auspices, that its final issue is likely to advance the cause of liberty and truth. There is a majesty in the silent progress of popular opinion among a great people, which has awed tyrants and agitated thrones. It has rebuked the insolence of demagogues, in every period of our history, and taught the self-constituted censors of public opinion, that the will of the people cannot and shall not be controlled. The folly of believing that the popular voice can be smothered, and the will of the people disregarded, may be read in the final decision of the country on the Bank of the United States, and the Annexation of Texas. The majority of the freemen of America believe that a National Bank is a dangerous, if not an unconstitutional corporation; and they have impressed this belief pretty forcibly upon the Public Councils. The annexation of Texas,

which, one short year ago, found little favor among the people, was carried by public acclamation. To effect so great a change in so short a time, it was only necessary to unveil the dark and subtle policy of England, whose councils, during the entire agitation, have been characterized with a degree of duplicity and Jesuitism, worthy of the times of Cesar Borgia and Alexander VI.

Such being the conservative spirit of Democratic institutions among an intelligent and a virtuous people, we may quietly await the appointed day when this, as well as all other great reforms, is sure to take place.*

* Almost all our travellers abroad have been deeply impressed with the necessity of action upon the Consular System. Mr. Tuckerman, in a work published some years ago, speaks thus :

* * * "The American Consul bade us adieu at the pier, and the facilities he had afforded us during the day, led me to reflect upon the importance of this office abroad, and the singular neglect of our government to its claims. Politicians among us are so absorbed in temporary questions and immediate objects, that it is difficult to attract their attention to any foreign interest. Yet, in a patriotic point of view, there are few subjects more worthy of the consideration of political reformers, than our Consular System. Of the utter indifference with which these offices are regarded, there are many evidences. A very gentlemanly man, who had fulfilled the duties of United States Consul at one of the Mediterranean ports for more than twenty years, was waited upon one morning by a stranger, who demanded the seal and books of the Con-

When we are prepared for so great and salutary a measure, the difficulty will all centre upon one point

sulate, showing a commission empowering him to fill the station. Common decency, to say nothing of civility, would require that this gentleman should have received some official notice of his expulsion. But the most curious circumstance in the case was, that, after a month had elapsed, the new Consul renewed his call, and stating he found the fees inadequate to his support, destroyed his commission, and departed. Another old incumbent, deservedly popular, discovered, for the first time, through the public prints, that his office had been abolished for more than a year. At present, these offices are chiefly held by merchants, whose personal interests are continually liable to conflict with their duty as public servants. Our Consuls, too, usually depend upon fees for remuneration, and a large part of these are paid by travellers. Those who make several successive visits to the same city, paying at each departure for the Consul's signature to their passports, cannot but feel annoyed at a tax from which other strangers are exempt.

“If salaries were instituted, proportioned to the labor and importance of each station, and liberal enough to secure the services of able men, the result, in every point of view, would be excellent. Generous and enlightened views of national intercourse are now rapidly prevailing, and our country should be the first to give them a practical influence. The French system is progressive, and the Consuls are, therefore, regularly educated for their duty. The English Consuls are accustomed to furnish the home-department with useful statistical information, which is of eminent service to the merchant, manufacturer, and political economist. If these inquiries were extended to scientific and other general subjects, it is

—*What system shall we adopt?* I would not assume the qualifications for so arduous a task as the construction of a Consular establishment suited to the wants of our commerce, and the spirit of our country. When such a work is achieved, it will not be the work of any one man, however wise he may be in counsel or ripe in experience. The experience

easy to perceive how extensively useful the Consular office might become. If there is any country which, in the present condition of the world, should be worthily represented, it is the United States. The extent of our commercial relations, and the rapid increase of American travellers, require it; but the honor of a young and prosperous nation, and fidelity to the important principles of freedom and popular education we profess, are still higher reasons. Men of intelligence and observation, who shall command the respect of their countrymen, and of the courts to which they are sent, should be placed at these posts of duty. Party feeling should be waived in such appointments. They should be regarded not merely as affording protection and facilitating intercourse, but as involving high responsibility, and furnishing occasion for various usefulness. Our Consuls should have the interests of their country at heart, not only as diplomatists, but, if possible, as men of literature and science, and, at all events, as enlightened and generous patriots."

The author informed me that the only comment he saw made upon this passage in any journal of this country, appeared in the Boston Mercantile Journal. This paper is edited by a retired sea-captain, who had had experience enough of the workings of our Consular System to interest himself in so necessary a reform.

and the wisdom of all who can contribute to such a labor should be enlisted.

It might not be a bad commencement to solicit contributions from citizens eminently qualified for such a task. Such is often the course adopted by foreign states. Prizes are awarded by European Sovereigns for luminous dissertations upon matters that demand the attention of the state; and there is perhaps no policy more worthy of the adoption of governments. An almost necessary preparatory step would be, an order from the Secretary of State to all our Consuls, to prepare, within a given space of time, a Statistical Table, showing the history of American Commerce, with every country in the world. These tables can be made out by consulting the Consular Archives, where they have been properly kept (if, indeed, we have one such Consulate, which is exceedingly doubtful), by examinations of the Custom House Records, and Archives of foreign nations, files of Commercial Gazettes, works on Commerce, and intercourse with intelligent men. Each Consul should also be required to prepare a statement of the practical operation of the present system in all its aspects.

These Reports should be published and submitted to the people for discussion, and referred, with all the essays, propositions, and *raisonnements* that may be offered, to an able body of Congressional Commissioners, furnished with every possible facility for doing their work well, and, after mature deliberation,

a full and luminous Report should be digested and submitted to Congress, with a plan for a new Consular System.

If any one of the different propositions already offered to Congress should be adopted, great advantages would immediately flow to our commerce—for all these plans have, I believed, contemplated the most essential points. But all of them I am inclined to think have been deficient in some respects. I have had occasion to learn that there would probably be little difference of opinion among Consuls, or commercial, or even sea-faring men in regard to the following points :

1. A Consular System should be adopted, totally different from the present, in all its distinguishing features.

2. Consuls should be paid salaries, adequate to their support, and an appropriation should be made for an outfit, for the pay of Vice-Consuls, and Secretaries, and Clerks—and this sum should be sufficient to maintain the Consul in a manner corresponding with the rank of his country and the dignity of his station.

3. They should be clothed with all necessary authority for a firm and efficient execution of justice, in all cases that may arise in foreign countries, affecting the interests, or the reputation of our citizens or Government.

4. Every Consul should be provided with a well-regulated *Chancery* which would require a Vice-

Consul (appointed by himself, with the advice and consent of the President or Senate), a Library, made up of all the standard works on Law, Commerce, and Diplomacy—the necessary furniture, &c., &c.

5. His powers, his rights, his responsibilities, his duties, his qualifications, and his privileges, should all be clearly and fully defined, and no modification or change should be introduced, but by the direct action of Congress.

6. He should be prohibited from engaging actively or passively, in any commercial or business operation, and every violation of his instructions should be followed by a peremptory recall.

7. Consular fees should be few, and clearly defined, and should all go to the Government.

8. The necessary grades of Consular rank should be established. In the chief port or capital, of every kingdom or State, a Consul-General should be appointed, of diplomatic rank, endowed with a limited control over the Consuls and Vice-Consuls under the same Government. This would dispense with the necessity of appointing *Chargés d’Affaires*. In those countries where we send *Ministers*, the Consul-General should still hold the same rank, and be subjected in a proper degree to the Minister—but this dependence should not infringe upon any of his rights or privileges, and his responsibilities should still remain the same.

9. No person should be appointed to the office of a Consul-General, who had not served three years as

a Consul. He should also be able to write and speak French, and the language of the country to which he is sent. He should also be a native-born citizen of the United States.

10. In connection with the Consular Establishment, Commercial Agents should be appointed, whose sole occupation should be to gather commercial information for the use of the Government. We have seldom had such officers, and yet, in their sphere, they are quite as useful as Consuls. At the great meeting of the Zollverein in 1843, thirteen commercial agents of Great Britain were on the spot! One American was there by accident, and, at the time, the only travelling commercial agent of the United States, I think, in the world. Is it to be supposed our Congress can be well informed on the commercial condition, policy, and relations, of foreign countries, when no more pains are taken to gather commercial information? They must be close students indeed, to know much about these matters, if they rely upon newspapers, or Commercial Treatises, or books of travel. My own observation has convinced me that upon commercial information gathered in that way, very little reliance can be placed. The price of stocks, and the fluctuations of trade may be pretty accurately known from such sources—but what has our Government to do with all this in regulating their foreign policy? The information the Statesman wants for his guidance in public deliberations, is more important and more extended ;

nor is it to be gained from published documents or acquired without great labor and careful investigation on the spot.

It is really too humiliating to contemplate the insensibility of our Government to these great interests. True, we are prosperous and powerful, and our commerce is rapidly extending—and our public men seem to think this is enough. It would be well to consider how much of all this prosperity is to be attributed to the wisdom of our policy, and the vigilance of our public men, and how much of it we can trace to the spirit of adventure and shrewd speculation which characterizes our people. For this is what has borne us on in our rapid career of advancement, in spite of the protection and the folly of our Government.

Why ! instances of the violation of the rights of our citizens in foreign countries, might be quoted without number, which have probably never come to the knowledge of the Government, or been listened to only to be forgotten. Our travellers can all tell of most flagrant cases of this description, of which they have been either the observers or the victims. One case in point.

During the recent disturbances in the Pontifical States, an American artist was arrested in his journey from Venice to Bologna, on suspicion of being concerned in some movement hostile to the Court of Rome. Not the slightest evidence existed of any such connection nor was any charge ever preferred

against him. He was ordered by the Police to leave Bologna within one hour, or his head would pay the forfeit. He could not go forward without the safe-conduct of the local authorities, and he was obliged to go back. He fled from Bologna with all haste, and abandoning the roads, where he might have easily fallen a prey to the barbarity of the *carrabinieri*, he escaped to the mountains, and made his way, as best he could, to Rome. It was in the coldest winter season, and exposure, hunger, and fatigue, sowed the seeds of pulmonary consumption in his system, which brought him to the grave in a few weeks! A wretched and innocent victim of tyranny.*

It is perfectly certain, there is not another Government on earth but our own, that would not have called the Court of Rome to an account, and demanded all the reparation that could be made, under the circumstances, for a dead man. Who can conceive of a more gross violation of the Law of Nations? And yet I am inclined to doubt if even the fact has yet come to the knowledge of our Government.

* This promising young artist's name is DEVEREUX, from South Carolina. I am astonished that chivalric State has not before now laid the case before the President, insisting that satisfaction be demanded from the Court of Rome. I was informed that the gentleman who was then our Consul at Rome, neither asked any explanation of the matter, from the Government of his Holiness, nor even communicated any information on the subject to his own Government at home!

Dr. Samuel G. Howe, the distinguished friend of the blind and of humanity everywhere, may be appealed to for repeated instances of similar injustice in his own person, from the Governments of Austria, Sardinia and Naples. In the city of Genoa, where the steamer stopped for a few hours on its way to Marseilles, his baggage was forcibly taken from him, carried ashore, and confiscated, under circumstances the most insulting and aggravated, without the formality of a trial, or an opportunity of defence, or even a notice to the Consul, his natural defender, of the accusation brought against him. And what was his crime? He had a small box of soap, and gloves, he had purchased at Naples, and it was not on the manifest of the steamer. But who was to blame for this? Certainly nobody but the captain. It is not the business of a passenger to see that his baggage is put upon the manifest of the vessel he embarks in. He reports his effects when he goes aboard, and the captain must do the rest. A more unjustifiable outrage could not be committed. I took such steps as I considered necessary. The authorities refused to comply with my demand, and I referred the case to the *Chargé d' Affaires* at Turin, who reported it to the Department of State. It has now been nearly two years since this transaction took place; and, up to the present time, I believe the Government have done nothing about it.

While I was in Florence a native-born citizen of the United States was arrested, imprisoned for fifteen

days, and exiled from the kingdom. I knew all the circumstances; he had committed no crime—broken no law. He was not allowed even the form of a trial; nor was he informed of the reason why he had excited the indignation of the Government.

I could cite many cases just as flagrant; and yet I do not believe our Government has bestowed any attention upon them. Many of our Consuls have assured me they are tired of communicating anything to the Government; for they never receive any reply to their communications, and they find it is best to let things take their own course! I must confess, such a conclusion is the natural result of Consular experience.

The blame of all this cannot be laid upon the people, for such facts are slow in coming to their knowledge. It is the business of their public servants, whom they have chosen for no other reason than to take care of their interests while they are cultivating the soil, making every valley ring with their machinery, and sending their vessels to sea. But it has been too true, for a long time, that many of our public men have been too busy to attend to the interests of the people;—too much time has been spent in political struggles, which only corrupted the nation. Any measure that met with the favor of partizans was debated day after day, week after week; and Congress has often been a theatre of low and offensive discussion and conflict, which has brought us into contempt, all over the world.

To win the favor of a party, or a clique, millions have been coolly voted away, for purposes that never would have met with the approbation of the people; while, under a pretext of economy, light-houses have been extinguished along our coast to save a few gallons of oil, and the merchantman left without a protector, when she went laden with her precious cargo to a distant port. Fifty thousand dollars more than was necessary have been paid, year after year, for printing public documents that were carted away to the lumber-rooms of the Capitol; while half that sum could not be given to adorn that same noble edifice with the choicest library for sale in Europe, and a petty German Prince takes it away, while three hundred Representatives of "the best educated people in the world" are voting it would be of very little service to America, as most of the Books and MSS. are in foreign languages. Such is the very reason why it should have been bought, for we have long had nearly all the Books in our own language worth possessing; and it is time our Scholars, and Cabinets, and Senators, and Jurists should consult the Literature, the History, the Science and the Laws of other nations.

I feel humbled at the necessity which so often forces me into a comparison of ourselves with foreign nations; but it is a comfort at least to feel that I am not to blame for it, and I never will be. Let us once more allude to the wakeful, the everlasting vigilance of British Cabinets. The British people

hold every Cabinet responsible for all that is done throughout the world, during their administration. Parliament votes money to sustain a noble and efficient Diplomatic and Consul corps, and the people hold the Cabinet responsible to take care that they are well represented. If an Ambassador or a Consul fails in his duty, the minister must give an account of it. If a British subject is treated with injustice or indignity, he appeals at once to the nearest Representative of his country, and is sure to receive reparation; and the minister is called to account if this be not done. This is as it should be, for when the means of accomplishing a public good are committed to a public agent, let him pay the penalty of his folly or neglect. Besides, Parliament never complains of a minister for spending money, whenever he shows that by it he rendered a service to his country. No agent of Great Britain ever had a bill protested, when he was able to show that he had incurred the expense in advocating any public interest, in securing justice for any British subject, in saving from disgrace, or in covering with honor the British name, in procuring any information which even a remote possibility might make useful, in throwing any new light upon History, or Science, or Art. Lord Melbourne's ministry sent Dr. Bowring through the East, and all along the shores of the Mediterranean, with a *carte-blanc*he, to look after the interests of the British empire. He was gone several years, and filled one of the noblest missions ever

committed to a statesman and a scholar. He scoured every country he went through, and made himself perfectly familiar with the policy, the history, the resources, the statistics of every nation he visited. Everything that could throw light over history, or commerce, or agriculture, or manufactures, or the mechanic or fine arts, everything that could contribute to enlighten the Cabinet in their movements or policy, in regard to any question that could ever concern their interests at home or abroad, was the object of his deepest solicitude, his most earnest endeavors, his most untiring efforts. Every facility the government could furnish him was put into his hands. In every country he visited, he employed the ablest men to aid him in his investigations. At one time several hundred of the most efficient men in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the islands of the Mediterranean, were at work for him. All the materials brought together by this all-pervading, all-searching, all-powerful machinery, were analyzed, condensed, and clearly prepared for the use of the government. And, to the praise of the British Parliament and the British People, an appropriation was made, not only to cover the enormous expense of this noble mission, but generously to reward the agent himself. The British people saw few immediate practical results to justify all this expenditure ; but they knew the Archives were enriched by the mission. Several years have gone by, and its fruits are now palpable. It made the British government familiar with every

question that concerned their interests, in a large portion of the world. It enabled them to adopt a subtle and refined policy towards many governments—it gave them several valuable treaties, which opened new channels of trade, and gave them control of ports, and harbors, and fortifications—put them in possession of that kind of intelligence which enabled them to give enlightened and minute instructions to all their public agents—to deal a bold and sudden blow in any quarter—in a word, to use the language of one of the most enlightened Diplomats of Great Britain (Lord Erskine), “That mission,” he once said to me at Genoa, “was worth more to any one of the great interests of England than it cost; and its final results no man can measure, for they will last till the end of time.” He added, too, “It has always been a matter of great surprise to me that your government pays no more attention to your foreign interests. You choose foreigners or merchants for your Consuls, and you recall all your ambassadors before they have had time to get ready to be of any service to your country.” Lord Erskine spoke from personal knowledge. He was British Ambassador in this country for several years.

Experience will one day teach us wisdom. God grant we may not learn the lesson too late. Some members of Congress from the Southern States made a movement a few years ago, and twenty thousand dollars were appropriated to employ a tobacco agent

in Europe, several years. This was a hopeful sign. Had the mission been looked to, much good would have come of it. A bad man was appointed. He went abroad, drew his pay regularly, nothing else was heard of him for several years! This is about the only attempt I ever heard of, on the part of our government, to gain any light on our great interests abroad. Had that man done his duty, I am certain the tobacco interest would have felt the good effects of it for ever. Thus far, scarcely an attempt has yet been made (with the exception of a few of our ministers at foreign courts), to break down those tremendous barriers that exclude that great staple from general consumption in Europe. So long as a man must pay from one to three dollars a pound for our tobacco in Italy, and Austria, and France, the planter will raise it at pauper prices at home.

Although I may appear to have wandered from my subject, in dwelling so long on this point, yet I regard it of vital importance to our nation. I hope that *the appointment and maintenance of Commercial Agents abroad*, will constitute a prominent feature in any revision of our Consular system. This matter certainly needs no words. It is too palpable to require argument, and too clear to need illustration.

FINALLY—I will offer but one more suggestion, and I doubt not it will be adopted by our Government at no distant day. It has been found a necessary provision in nearly all other States, particularly in Republics and Commonwealths.

There should be A SECRETARY, OR BOARD OF COMMERCE established at the Seat of Government, to whom all Commercial questions and interests should be committed. Similar arrangements have been found necessary in our Navy, and I believe experience has proved, that the different *Bureaux* have added no little efficiency to our Marine. I am persuaded still greater advantages would flow from the adoption of something like it in connection with Commerce.

Such a Department should have the executive control of the entire Consular System. Consuls should pass an examination before them as rigid as that of the Naval officer before our Naval Boards, and their acquiescence be necessary in their appointment to the same extent. All the official correspondence of Consuls and Commercial Agents should be carried on with this Department, which should prepare periodical Reports for every Congress, embracing all the information thus contributed—audit all Consular accounts for sums disbursed for destitute and distressed seamen, franking and freight of official packages, &c., &c.

Such a Board or Department would find a plenty of occupation; and the advantages to be derived from it could hardly be over-estimated. Their *surveillance* would impart inconceivable efficiency to our Consular Establishment, and their Statistical Reports pour illumination over all our public councils. A spirit of liberality should pervade the new

system, and a generous sum allowed to Consuls for purchasing commercial documents and tables, maps and charts,* for surveys of harbors and coasts—new works on the sciences and arts—models of inventions, samples of manufactures, improvements in mechanism, natural curiosities, &c. These might be distributed through Public Departments, Institutions and Libraries, &c., and in a few years we should have some of the most valuable galleries of this kind in the world.

Such a spirit has prevailed in the Navy Department; and the enlightened gentlemen who have controlled it, have now the gratitude and esteem of all our citizens who appreciate the benign effects of such beautiful aids to the Lights of Science and general intelligence. This spirit belongs to the genius of our Institutions, and ought to characterize *all* our National Councils. This was the spirit that gave birth to the Exploring Expedition. It was with no little delight I heard of the glorious success that crowned that noble enterprise ;

* At the suggestion of one of our most judicious, able and intelligent Naval Commanders, I had an accurate and beautiful Chart executed, by skilful engineers, of the Gulf of Spezia (in the Kingdom of Sardinia), and forwarded it to the Navy Department. It was done under my own supervision on the spot, at a trifling expense, and would be of great service to our Navy, particularly if we should (as we shall probably be obliged to do) make that a Naval Dépôt. I was informed by Mr. Bancroft, that no provision was made for any such work, however useful it might be.

and that the Government had commissioned the publication of a great work, on a scale of magnificence worthy of the subject and the country, and that copies were to be presented to Foreign Governments.

I hope such enterprises will emanate more frequently from our National Legislature. Their advantages cannot be estimated by any pecuniary calculation—interests inconceivably more grand are promoted—love of science and truth diffused among the people—a noble display of that enlightened policy that ought to characterize nations, offered to the contemplation of foreigners, and a spirit inflamed in all ranks of society, that will contribute to the preservation of our social and political virtue, and the perpetuation of our free Constitutions. No sovereign has ever displayed the same liberality as the Italian Republics of the middle ages—the Commonwealth of Antiquity—and have not the friends of Liberal principles, throughout the world, who are watching the workings of our Political System with great and anxious interest, reason to expect that we shall as far surpass all former Republics in our patronage of all that can contribute, in the Arts and the Sciences, to the diffusion of public light and virtue, as we are believed to have outstripped them all in our rapid career of advancement?

Legislators are mistaken, if they suppose their constituents to be opposed to such a spirit. Every generous act of this kind has been greeted with joy

by the country—every public man who has given it his support, and every President who, in his appointments, has been mindful of the services, literary and scientific men have rendered to the country, has won golden opinions from all classes. Nor is it unworthy the consideration of our chief men, to remember, that the display of such a spirit wins for them a warm and enthusiastic support, from that powerful class of our citizens, who have withdrawn from the vortex of political struggle, equally indifferent which party triumphs, to devote themselves to the elegant pursuits of Art and Literature. This number is small, I am aware, but rapidly increasing—and already they might turn the scale in a general election. But their influence is not to be measured by their numbers. They are the moulding power of the nation—by their writings, and addresses, and correspondence, and conversations, they put forth an influence to which no limits can be assigned in any direction it takes its way.

Neither should it be forgotten, that these are the men who transmit to coming times, the history of their own. To whom are the magistrates of Greece and Rome indebted, that their names have been handed down bright with glory, and “covered with perfume,” through so many ages?—The scholars whom they admitted to their confidence and their friendship. Who has illustrated the History of the splendid House of the Medici, and made the vale of the Arno the Paradise of the literary world?—The

scholars, who lived at the villas and sat under the shadow of that magnificent race, some of whom fled to their Court from the persecutions of other Princes.

But it is more than time I should bring this long and I fear, tedious letter, to a close. I have been, I know but too well, too feeble an advocate for so good and so great a cause. But I have done what I could. Let others who can do better, come forward and advocate my plans, or propose better ones. But in God's name, let something be done, and done immediately.

If you have had patience to follow me to the end, I thank you for your attention. If I can feel that my effort has met with your approbation, it will be at least a pleasing satisfaction. If I shall be so happy as to awaken in Congress any new interest on this momentous subject, which shall result at last in the construction of some noble, some efficient, and enduring Consular System, it will give me greater satisfaction than anything in the world. If I fail, I shall not be the first man that has failed in a good cause. "But we shall not fail." I am persuaded the President, and his Cabinet feel as deeply interested as any men, in the prosperity of the country, and will bring all their influence to aid in this good cause.

With many thanks for your kindness in allowing me to address to you this communication, I subscribe myself, with great respect,

Your obedient servant and friend,

C. EDWARDS LESTER.

New York, Oct. 1st 1845.

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